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ABSTRACT

This document presents interview data acquired from white and black teachers and white and black parents. Among the questions dealt with are: why white teachers teach in black schools in the inner city; whether white teachers are willing to accept black leadership (i.e., the black principal); whether a majority white faculty should be assigned to a majority black school; whether racism is widespread among the majority white faculty; whether the white teacher is afraid to discipline the black student, even when the need to do so is obvious; and the extent to which white teachers can interpret the black subculture. Five papers are included, addressing issues such as the white teachers in the all-black school, some comments on the Lincoln project and problems encountered by white teachers in black schools and instruction, learning, and the problems encountered by white teachers in black schools. One paper by public school educators addresses the issue of white teachers in black schools. Firm conclusions concerning all white teachers in black schools in the inner city are held not to be possible from composite interviews. Impressions and concerns identified are: that white teachers and black students come from and live in different worlds; that there is a lack of communication between many white teachers and black teachers in black schools; and, that parents are more concerned with the quality of their children's education than the teacher's skin color. (Author/AM)

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WHITE TEACHERS, BLACK SCHOOLS, AND THE INNER CITY:

SOME IMPRESSIONS AND CONCERNS

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by
Eugene A. Lincoln
Associate Professor of Urban Education
University of Pittsburgh

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TO THE READER

According to data published by the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the number of white teachers in black schools across the country increased during the 1960s. It was also during the 1960s, however, that race relations may have been at their worst—particularly in the inner cities.

The increase in the number of white teachers, on the one hand, and the decline in race relations, on the other, appeared to be incongruous. Perhaps the fundamental questions were: Do white teachers in black schools in the inner city encounter problems that they wouldn't encounter in white schools? If so, why? Are these due to racial prejudice? A difference in social class? Inadequate professional preparation? A lack of total commitment? Unwillingness by the black community to accept white teachers?

Clearly, questions of this type did not lend themselves to statistical answers. They pertained to values, feelings, and attitudes. Further, many of the questions required an introspection, a self-analysis, that might be offensive to persons in general—but particularly to those who would participate in a study. Since it was felt that insight into questions of this type was badly needed, an attempt was made to design a study that was scientifically acceptable, of value in education, but not too offensive to the participants.

Participants: White teachers (N=44), black teachers (N=28), white parents (N=14), and black parents (N=14) participated in the study. They were identified by three approaches. First, at the beginning of the study about seven teachers and parents were asked to serve as contact persons for the study, in other words, merely to assist in identifying participants. They identified most of the teachers. Second, participants identified by contact persons also identified other participants. Third, the researcher met with two groups of teachers who were teaching in the inner city and with a group of parents attending a political meeting at a local church, explained the study, and requested volunteers. A majority of the parents were identified as a result of the church meeting.

With few exceptions, the teachers were teaching in black schools in the inner city – grades K through 12. The black parents had, or had had, children in those schools. A majority of the participants were female.

Interviews: The researcher interviewed the 100 participants on a one-to-one basis for about one hour. Each interview was taped. After the interview the interviewee and researcher chatted informally – usually over refreshments – for an additional 20 to 30 minutes. All of the interviews were completed during the first year of the study.

During the early stages of the study a list of about 75 questions pertaining to white teachers in black schools in the inner city was prepared and used as a guide during the interview. The list included the following questions:

- Why do white teachers teach in black schools in the inner city?
- Are white teachers willing to accept black leadership, for example, the black principal?
- Should a majority-white faculty be assigned to a majority-black school?
- Is racism widespread among the majority-white faculty?

- Is the white teacher afraid to discipline the black student, even when the need to do so is obvious?
- To what extent can white teachers interpret the black subculture?

It was not the intent to ask all of the prepared questions during an interview; or the same questions, for that matter. No attempt was even made to ask, for example, all of the white teachers the same questions. In some instances the response to one of the prepared questions enabled the interviewer to ask a series of closely related questions. In other instances a question was asked more than once during an interview but phrased differently. In still others the interviewee was encouraged to raise questions and respond to them — a technique which proved to be very effective. Certain questions were used rather consistently, however, in an effort to determine whether white teachers, black teachers, white parents, and black parents tended to respond to them in a similar manner. One such question was: Why do white teachers teach in black schools in the inner city?

Most of the teachers were interviewed in their schools after the school day. The parents generally were interviewed in their homes. A few participants were interviewed either in the researcher's office or home. It was neither necessary nor desirable to complete the interviews in any one group, for example, white teachers, before interviewing the participants in another group.

Selection of Tapes: Each of the 100 interviews was taped. Arbitrarily, it was decided that a stratified sample of 30 percent, or 30 of the tapes, would be representative. It was necessary, therefore, to select 30 percent of the tapes in each of the four groups, for example, 30 percent of the tapes in the white teachers group, or 13 tapes.

Four panels made the selections. Panel A, for example, was assigned 25 tapes: white teachers (N=11), black teachers (N=7), white parents (N=3), and black parents (N=4). Panel A selected the following tapes: white teachers (3), black teachers (2), white parents (1), and black parents (1), for a total of seven (7) tapes. Panels B, C, and D selected 7, 8, and 8 tapes, respectively.

Since the study was exploratory, it did not seem fair to require the panels to use rigid guidelines in the selection process. Several things were done, however, in an effort to maintain some continuity. First, the four panel leaders were selected, and the objectives of the project were discussed with them fully. The selections were based primarily upon race, sex, and an understanding of schools in the inner city. A black male, white male, black female, and white female served as the panel leaders. Second, each panel leader was asked to select two additional panel members based upon sex, race, and understanding of schools in the inner city, and to include one parent on each panel. Six of the 12 individuals on the four panels were white. Six were teaching in schools in the inner city. Third, each panel was asked to consider certain types of questions during the selection process. For example: Did the interviewee attempt to respond to all of the questions in an objective manner? Was there clear evidence of a broad knowledge and understanding of schools in the inner city? Were there contradictions in the responses? Was the tape audible? Was there evidence that white teachers were experiencing unusual problems in the schools? If so, did the interviewee offer helpful suggestions?

In making the sections, a panel listened to a tape in its entirety, discussed the tape, and placed it into one of the following categories: poor, fair, good, and excellent. After listening to all of the tapes in a particular group, for example, white teachers,

and discussing the tapes sufficiently, the panel chose the required number of tapes in that group before listening to tapes in another group. For example, Panel A chose its three (3) tapes in the white teachers group before listening to its seven (7) tapes in the black teachers group.

Prior to assigning the tapes to the panels, the names of the interviewees were blotted out and code numbers substituted as a means of identifying the tapes. A list of the names of interviewees and corresponding code numbers was filed in the office of the researcher.

Transcribing the Tapes: Kelly Service, Inc., an agency in Pittsburgh, transcribed the 30 tapes selected by the panels: white teachers (N=13), black teachers (N=9), white parents (N=4), and black parents (N=4). The transcribed material was about 750 typewritten pages, double-spaced, and in the question-response format used during the interviews. Again, the appropriate code numbers were used to identify the transcriptions.

Initial Deletions: Two black teachers and one white teacher in schools in the inner city made the initial deletions. Each teacher had had several years of teaching experience in the inner city. Two of them were teaching at the elementary level; the other at the high school level.

Individually, the teachers read the material for each group, for instance, white teachers, and made tentative deletions. Then they met during evenings and on weekends, discussed the material for that particular group, and agreed on the deletions – often by voting. It was felt that the initial deletions should be made without rigid guidelines; rather, that the three experienced teachers should be given reasonable discretion.

Almost all of the deleted material was in two areas. The teachers deleted responses which in their judgment were of value only to the respondent, were redundant, or overlapped. Also, at the beginning of each interview, the researcher explained the project and otherwise engaged in some small talk in an effort to break the ice – often found to be essential because of the tape recorder. All of this material was deleted.

When the teachers completed their assignment, the material still appeared too voluminous – more than 300 pages. Further deletions were made by the researcher. During each interview an attempt was made to place questions in perspective, sometimes using several statements. Further, the researcher responded to questions raised by the interviewee. Some of the statements and all of the researcher's responses were deleted.

Composite Interviews: The material was prepared in the form of composite interviews. This was accomplished in three steps. First, it was no longer necessary to identify the interviewees individually; therefore, all of the code numbers were blotted out in each of the four groups. For example, each of the interviewees (13) in the white teachers group had been assigned a code number. These code numbers were blotted out, leaving a body of material provided by white teachers. Second, the questions and responses in each of the four groups were carefully edited and arranged sequentially in an attempt to obtain continuity, consistency, and a similar writing style. If only one white teacher, for example, responded to a question, the question and response were included in the final report. If two or more of the teachers responded to the same question, and in the judgment of the researcher the responses were not in conflict, the researcher selected what seemed to be the best and most complete response. If

two or more of the teachers responded to the same question, and in the judgment of the researcher the responses were in conflict, the researcher eliminated the question and responses if the same number of teachers responded both ways (usually positively and negatively). In those few instances, however, where, for example, three (3) teachers responded one way and four (4) teachers responded another way, and the researcher felt that the difference of one (1) teacher was significant, the best and most complete response made by the four teachers was selected for the final report.

In short, the material from 30 interviews was pooled and used as if it had been provided only by four individuals: white teacher, black teacher, white parent, and black parent. The term composite interview was used to refer to the interview with each of the four personalities.

Third, the composite interviews were labeled: WHITE TEACHER: On White Teachers; BLACK TEACHER: On White Teachers; WHITE PARENT: On White Teachers; and BLACK PARENT: On White Teachers. Several experts were asked to read the composite interviews and submit papers.

Papers By Experts: Two psychologists, a sociologist, an educator at the university level, and a panel of public school educators submitted papers. All of them drew heavily upon their experiences with white teachers in black schools in the inner city. The papers added another very important and supportive dimension to the study — particularly the recommendations for further research and suggestions for faculties in inner-city schools.

Wendell Rivers, a psychologist, discussed in his paper nine interpersonal problems, or conflicts, found in the composite interviews. He was of the opinion that most of the problems were the result of differences in background between white teachers and black students. Rivers took the position, however, that such conflicts were not confined to relationships between white teachers and black students. He asserted that black, middle-class teachers often have many of the same conflicts.

Segal, a school psychologist, agreed with Rivers that differences in background do contribute significantly to problems between white teachers and black students. But he also devoted much of his paper to a discussion of various views held by many teachers, for instance, the inferiority of black students, as contributing factors. Furthermore, he saw a close relationship between the retreat of white Americans from the decaying inner city and the problems encountered by white teachers in black schools.

Both David Gottlieb, a sociologist, and LaMar Miller, an educator, supported the notion that white teachers do encounter certain problems in black schools, but they appeared to place less emphasis on the importance of background, racial prejudice, values, attitudes, and so forth, as contributing factors than did Segal or Rivers.

Gottlieb implied that motivation, or reason for being in a particular school, was more important than race in determining whether a teacher encountered problems in the school. In this regard, he made a distinction between teachers who chose to be in a black school and teachers who were forced into the school and urged that we cease to think in terms of racial monoliths. However, Gottlieb did find in the composite interview with the white teacher that white teachers maintain a defensive posture and see themselves as uncomfortable strangers in a hostile land.

Miller emphasized in his paper the instructional reason for problems of white teachers in black schools, instead of the psychological or sociological reasons. Miller offered three different theories in an effort to explain underachievement in the class-

room: the demographic theory, which claims that where children live and go to school is significant in their achievement; the sociological theory, which suggests that cultural and class differences are the determining factors in achievement; and the psychological theory, which asserts that black children lack the motivation to learn and are often rather frustrated when required to learn or held to a high educational standard. He went on to point out that a relationship existed between these theories and teacher attitudes; also, that the theories influenced behavior in classroom situations.

The team of public school educators identified four problem areas in the composite interviews: exposure, relationships, preparation, and evaluation, and made suggestions that should help a faculty in the inner city bring its unique problems into clearer focus and seek solutions for those problems. It was believed that this paper would add a practical dimension to the project.

Personal Reflections and Acknowledgments: The efforts, biases, and opinions of many individuals are represented in the project – including those of the researcher. A few comments concerning the technique used in the project, however, personal reflections, and a word of thanks seem appropriate.

To be sure, there are critics of the technique used in the project – the composite interview. Perhaps their major criticism is that composite interviews reflect the feelings, values, and attitudes of the individuals who write the questions and final responses more often than the individuals who make the initial responses. They would also probably say that the interviews are not highly factual, definitive, or generalizable. In other words, they question the objectivity of composite interviews.

There was some precedent for the technique used in the project. It was very similar to that used by Oscar Lewis in *Five Families* and *The Children of Sanchez;* and Robert Coles in *Uprooted Children.*

Composite interviews provide valuable insights into sensitive topics such as the one in this project. Furthermore, if the material is handled in a professional manner, the results can be scientifically acceptable. The researcher tried hard to follow procedures that would not make this project the exception. Only the reader can be the final judge.

It would be impossible to draw firm conclusions from the project concerning all white teachers in black schools in the inner city. Composite interviews simply do not support such conclusions, but certain impressions and concerns do seem highly warranted.

What seems to be a realistic backdrop for the impressions and concerns must first be provided. First, the number of black schools in the inner city is increasing, due generally to the immigration of blacks and the emigration of whites. Second, the number of white teachers in black schools in the inner city is increasing continually. Third, racial strife across the United States is noticeably present. Fourth, the quality of education in many schools in the inner city is less than satisfactory.

At least five impressions and concerns seem in order. First, white teachers and black students come from and live in different worlds. They speak different languages. And many of the conflicts between white teachers and their black students are very closely related to the differences. Second, there is a lack of communication between many white teachers and black teachers in black schools. As a matter of fact, they seem to segregate themselves – even in the cafeteria. It seems reasonable to conclude that the segregation affects the teaching-learning process adversely. Third, black parents are

more concerned about their children getting a quality education than they are about the teacher's color, but it appears that initially, black parents are less trusting of white teachers than they are of black teachers. Fourth, some white teachers are truly dedicated and, therefore, always try to go above and beyond the call of duty in the inner city, but too often many of them are frustrated by conditions over which they have little, if any, control – absenteeism among students and among their colleagues. Fifth, with few exceptions, white parents have too little factual information concerning schools in the inner city. This is most unfortunate; it may even be a tragedy.

Placed against this backdrop, the impressions and concerns are both disturbing and challenging. They are disturbing because they suggest a continual decrease in the quality of education in schools in the inner city. They are challenging because they demand a concerted effort by all segments of our society – the teaching profession especially – in order to improve the quality of education in the inner city. Perhaps mere cooperation is the real challenge.

The researcher is deeply indebted to the black teachers, white teachers, and parents who participated in the project. It would not have been possible without them. Thanks must also be extended to the many colleagues at the University of Pittsburgh, school principals, school supervisors, and teachers who shared their many ideas and gave valuable assistance unselfishly. Warm thanks must be given to students who have enrolled in the urban education classes taught by the researcher and to teachers who have participated in workshops on urban education he has conducted. All of them served as a sounding board for many of the ideas in the final report.

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Eugene A. Lincoln
Associate Professor of
Urban Education

University of Pittsburgh
January, 1975

FOREWORD

We appear to be in a period of relative quiet in comparison with the frantic educational activities of the 1960s. With the smoke cleared, we can take inventory of some of the lessons learned and the trends surfacing for the '70s and beyond. It is clear that schools are in a period of profound transition. Attempts to equalize educational opportunities for a pluralistic population have placed a severe strain on our educational institutions and their new mission to respond effectively and sensitively to human diversity.

It is clear that while intense criticism of our public schools has been made, the educational consumer shows no sign of giving up on the need for quality schools. What has taken place is a new awareness that, in an advanced technological society, schools are important to future success. Further, the present fiscal policies in the control of an inflational cycle, have also made the public and professional aware that rising school costs do not necessarily lead to improved education.

Further, while it has been two decades since the 1954 Supreme Court decision of *Brown vs. Board of Education,* the implications continue to the present day, as the contents of this book remind us.

The acute problems facing urban education in particular, therefore, show no signs of easing. After several decades of experience with desegregation and almost a decade with compensatory education, the quality of education has not improved substantially for millions of Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Indian children. This has led to a stronger call for self-determination in the affairs of education, of community control of the schools themselves.

While such political and economic forces are at work, life inside the schools goes on fairly much as usual. The structure of the school as an institution continues to impose ground rules on school personnel and students alike – shaping their behavior like some forceful kind of hidden persuader. Ironically, while we have spent considerable time trying to study the students and their background; courses of study in science, social studies and math; programmed instruction; instructional television; and the like, sufficient attention to the institutional setting itself has not yet been paid. Yet, we are now talking about such issues as institutional racism. That is to say, that built into the structure of the school itself are values, attitudes, and procedures which discriminate against all those who do not adjust to the established norms of the system. In practical terms, this means that most of the adults who are trying to play by the norms of the school end up not only blaming the learner for any failure, but classifying children by labeling them "slow," "disruptive," "underachiever," "deprived." A vast number of such labels are placed on black children. Since the school structure rewards those who can adjust, the others are left at the mercy of the institutional psychology of expectations – the well-known self-fulfilling prophecy.

We have also learned that the problem of delivering quality education to a diverse society is extremely complicated. Nonetheless, the important role played by the teacher as the major front-line agent remains uncontested. It is at this basic level that the interaction with students takes place. Who the teacher is, his disposition and style, have a great deal to do with how children and their parents relate to school. Consequently, it is very appropriate that we continue to give high priority to careful analyses of the complex of variables surrounding the teacher and how he or she relates

to children. One set of variables concerns the effect that the race of the teacher has on the children. A more specific set of factors concerns white teachers and black children. The focal question posed by Prof. Eugene Lincoln at the University of Pittsburgh was: Do white teachers in black schools encounter problems that they would not encounter in white schools?

Professor Lincoln's professional focus on urban education has led him to probe for possible answers to this and related questions. This report speaks to these issues. In reading the pages that follow, the reader will realize that we are not dealing with definitive answers or absolute principles. As with most serious inquiries, there are more questions raised than answers provided.

Yet, a careful review will provide the concerned reader with an array of sensitive insights concerning the impact of adult motivation on children's learning; of the need for school personnel to understand, respect, and connect with the cultural orientation of children and their families; the aspirational dimensions of black and white parents; how white teachers feel about white teachers in black schools; student feelings about their school experiences; and a host of other "firing-line" problems.

Above all, we are all left with the uncomfortable, if inevitable sense that there are no simple answers to complex problems.

Mario D. Fantini
Professor and Dean, Faculty
of Education, State University
of New York at New Paltz

INTRODUCTION

It is a little more than a decade now, since the early 1960s, that all of education woke up to the problems encountered in the inner-city schools of our urban areas. In particular, teacher educators came to realize how ineffective the great majority of teacher-preparation programs were in producing teachers who had a commitment to and the necessary skills for working successfully in poverty-area schools.

There were a number of interrelated reasons for this failure on the part of our college or university teacher education programs. Generally, students in these programs were white and middle class in background, attitudes, values, and mores. In their own lives they had grown up in fairly homogeneous communities with little chance to know, interact with, or develop an understanding of people who were living in poverty, especially people from minority groups. Their college programs of preparation provided little or nothing in the way of special knowledge or in-school experiences to prepare them for dealing with pupils in poverty-area schools whose life styles, values, and attitudes toward education were so different from their own.

Although it may be less true today, another aspect of the problem in those earlier years was the mobility pattern of teachers within large city school systems. Given the factors mentioned above of middle-class teachers with no background of experiences for working with minority people and others in poverty, studies generally showed that those teachers with sufficient time or tenure in the school system transferred out of inner-city schools to more "favored" schools housing middle- and upper-class pupils. Replacement for the transferring teachers were usually new, inexperienced teachers. The impact of this pattern of teacher movement was quite clear. The very pupils who needed strong, experienced, understanding teachers and a stable, on-going school faculty did not get them. Thus, the quality of the educational programs for these pupils, and the pupils themselves, suffered.

A look at the current situation with regard to teachers and teacher education reveals several changes from that of a decade ago. An obviously crucial change has occurred in the area of teacher supply. In 1964 there simply was not a source of certified teachers large enough to meet the demands of the public schools. In this sellers market teachers could find jobs almost anywhere they wished to go and were in favored positions to request the schools in which they wished to teach. In 1974, quite the reverse is true. We have a projected surplus of several hundred thousand teachers; jobs are scarce; the birth rate is declining; and teachers are moving less from one system to another and staying in their jobs longer.

Changes have also occurred in the field of teacher education. A greatly increased number of colleges and universities attempt to prepare students to work in urban schools. This is especially true, as one might expect, of institutions located in metropolitan areas. As the movement toward performance-based teacher education continues to gain momentum, programs of preparation are becoming more action-oriented and field based, thus hopefully providing students with longer, more continuous and realistic experiences with pupils. Such changes in teacher education should provide a supply of teachers who can effectively work with disadvantaged pupils in inner-city schools.

If such teachers are, in fact, produced for the profession, we are still faced with the problem which Dr. Lincoln has addressed in this report. For the teachers already in

service as well as for teachers yet to be prepared, there is the question to be faced: Do white teachers in black schools encounter problems that they would not encounter in white schools? And, I would add: Are there problems which white teachers in black schools encounter which black teachers do not? How do the problems of white and black teachers differ and to what degree? Since Dr. Lincoln did not attempt to deal with the latter questions, investigations into them using the present project as a base would seem pertinent.

As director of the Urban Teacher Preparation Program at Syracuse University since 1964, I am well aware of the practical and philosophical question that is raised in the minds of many white teachers working in schools with predominantly black pupils: Can I, a white teacher, really be an effective teacher of black children? In my experience, every group of intern teachers struggles with this. And as one reads the transcripts of the interviews, the question is a recurrent one for which, because of the complexities of such situations, we do not have definitive answers.

As might be expected, reactions to the questions raised in the interviews vary considerably from respondent to respondent, both black and white. Yet, overall, I believe this report has much to offer white teachers who are teaching or who plan to teach in black schools. What comes through loud and clear are the needs for white teachers, and I would broaden that to include all teachers, to know the school community; to know the parents of their pupils; to believe and accept the idea that black children can and should learn in school; to know how the expectations of the teacher affect children's learning; to grow continuously in understanding the life styles, language, values, and mores of their black pupils.

While these needs are an essential base for the white teacher in black schools, something more is required if the teacher is to be effective. As Dr. Gottlieb points out in his section of the report:

> Unfortunately the "right" and "proper" motivations are not sufficient to ensure quality teaching, and while altruism is a popular and commendable value, it is not a guarantor of appropriate or necessary skills. The desire to be helpful must be matched with the *ability* and *skill* to deal with the needs and expectations of those whom one seeks to help. *Too often those who choose to work with the poor, the disadvantaged, the less-than-affluent, believe that proper attitudes and values will be sufficient. I would propose that those in need of help, those in need of skills, and those in need of necessary abilities to survive in our society would prefer functional assistance to "understanding."*
>
> *(Italics mine.)*

This project has opened up an exploration of a basic problem which urban schools will continue to face in the foreseeable future: white teachers in black schools. Most of the people interviewed seem to agree that black pupils should have black teachers. One black teacher, responding to a question as to whether black teachers and white teachers have basically the same teaching style, stated it this way:

> On first impulse I would say the teaching styles are about the same simply because they have been trained by some of the same people. However, I think black teachers bring to the learning situation something that white teachers don't have. Perhaps that something is identity; perhaps it is something else.

Anyway, black teachers can feel a sense of belonging. They can empathize with the black student, for their plight in the society has been basically the same as the plight of their students. Identity, a sense of belonging, empathy, etc., facilitate learning, I think.

It cannot be denied that these are good and valid reasons for the need for more black teachers for our schools. However, it is also obvious that there simply are not enough such teachers to meet the demand. If this is true, then teachers, administrators, and parents must accept that fact and search cooperatively for ways to help white teachers become more effective in their work with black pupils.

Dr. Lincoln is to be commended for this exploration. It is hoped that further research and improved programs of teacher education will enable urban schools to provide increasingly better education for the children and youth of this nation who live in poverty.

Ernest J. Milner
Director of the Urban
Teacher Preparation Program
Syracuse University

WHITE TEACHER: On White Teachers

Q: Had you had very much contact with black people before being assigned to a black school?

R: Well, I'm from a small town – about 40,000 people. Five or six black families lived in the town, so we didn't have the black-white situation. Irish Catholics, Slavs, and other ethnic groups lived in the community, and the economic differences were great. The plumber, black, had a better house than we had. One of the things I was proud of was that my background had always made me aware of people (the public school also did this) and how wonderful that America could provide you with such a range of experiences. I thought I was open to any kind of person. My parents were very liberal-minded. I don't mean Women's Lib and all that orgy stuff. I mean they taught me not to stereotype; rather, to accept people on an individual basis. I attended a small, conservative college. Very few blacks attended the college, but I became friendly with one or two of them. I soon realized that I didn't know blacks on a personal basis. My first teaching assignment was in a white school. Later, I was assigned to a black school. Eventually I became friendly with some of the teachers and felt close to them.

Q: Five or six black families lived in the town in which you grew up, and you became friendly with one or two blacks in college. Before being assigned to a black school, then, your contacts with blacks were very limited. Was your performance as a teacher affected as a result of the limited contacts?

R: I don't think so; not at all. I found that talking to black parents, for example, was the same as talking to white parents. I saw no difference.

Q: You teach in an all-black school; however, the faculty is majority-white. How would you rate the faculty?

R: All of our teachers are very well qualified. There isn't one bad teacher in the school. All of them are over-average.

Q: What should be the racial composition of the faculty in the black school?

R: The racial composition in every school, regardless of where it is located, should reflect the racial composition of the teaching profession. For example, if 75 percent of the teachers in the profession are white, then 75 percent of the faculty in all schools should be white.

Q: Numerous black schools in major cities have majority-white faculties, which is of concern to an increasing number of blacks. They are not concerned that white teachers are on the faculties; rather, that a majority of the faculties are white. Can a majority-white faculty in a black school be as effective as a majority-black faculty?

R: Why can't it?

Q: Can it?

R: I don't see why not.

Q: But can it? One function of the school is to perpetuate the subculture of its students. Spirituals, for example, are an integral part of the black subculture. They are intended to convey a message – a feeling of oneness, if you will. Can you sing a Negro spiritual with your students and expect as much "oneness" to be generated as would be generated if a black teacher were singing with them?

R: We are teaching our students as the white world is. But we're also teaching them black songs. Just the other day we were teaching them to sing "We Shall Overcome." And I sang along with them. Some of the students laughed. But I kept on singing. They wouldn't tell me why they were laughing.

Q: Would they have laughed if a black teacher had been singing with them?

R: Yes.

Q: Would you say that black teachers and white teachers in white schools encounter the same kinds of problems?

R: Certain types of people tend to have more difficulty with the students than other types – not necessarily black or white teachers. Right now I can put together a profile of the teacher. However, the teacher is basically afraid of the kids. I don't have any problems with the students because I see them as individuals. Anyway, I really enjoy teaching them, and I think they like me.

Q: Some scholars claim that there is a black language. Be this as it may, black students often use words that seem to be understood by other blacks much more readily than by whites. Have you been exposed to any of these words?

R: One that comes to mind immediately is "mother." I use it quite often, and sometimes they call me "mother." They frequently laugh when the term is used, and they have refused to tell me why. There is another word somewhere between slang and idiom that they call "dozens." I wasn't really out of it so far as the meaning of that word was concerned. I was a little in, but I wasn't all the way in. One day I referred to the class as "you people," and the class became very defensive. Later I learned that they had become defensive because they thought the comment had been directed toward black people in general rather than toward the class. They thought I was making a distinction between two types of people.

Q: Can a white teacher make as much of a contribution in a black school as a black teacher?

R: More of a contribution. A white teacher has more valuable information in a black school, just as a black teacher has more valuable information in a white school. When the only white people these kids see—except people coming around to screw them out of an insurance payment or something—are their white teachers, and if the teachers are concerned and really trying to help them, their presence will improve the students' perceptions of people in general. I think we'd both agree that a white teacher in a black school is more valuable than a white teacher in a white school. On the other hand, when you have all white teachers and all black janitors, this doesn't help either.

Q: Most of the blame for low achievement in any school should be placed on the faculty. Since a tremendously disproportionate number of teachers in black schools in the city are white, most of the blame for low achievement should be placed on them; not students, parents, administrators, etc. Do you agree or disagree?

R: I would disagree. If the administrator in the school is weak, students can do whatever they want to do and not be punished. And they know this. It is easier for white administrators in black schools to appease rather than to educate black students. If a student is not achieving in class, the administrator would rather give him some responsibility—such as hall duty—than sit in the class and find out why the student is not achieving. Furthermore, students know that the more trouble they cause the more privileges they will get. I don't think you can just blanketly say the teachers are at fault.

Q: The backgrounds of black teachers and black students are the same basically. The backgrounds of white teachers and black students are different basically. If you agree with these assertions, doesn't it follow that black teachers can relate to black students, and vice versa, better than white teachers can relate to them?

R: That's a many-faceted question. People with similar backgrounds probably relate to one another better than they relate to people with dissimilar backgrounds. But this is only a physical relationship. If I were in a situation with Indians and one other white person, I would associate with the white person. A black child entering school for the first time would probably have a greater kindred feeling for a black teacher than a white teacher and, therefore, be more inclined to associate with the black teacher. After all, the teacher has the same image as the child's mother or father. Both of these are illustrations of physical relationships, and such relationships are not lasting. What I am really trying to say is that black teachers may be able to relate to black students better than white teachers at the beginning of their schooling. However, the ability is only physical, and it decreases as the children move through the grades.

Q: You seem to be saying that black teachers relate to black students better than white teachers only in the earlier grades and characterized it as a "physical relationship." You're implying that black teachers either gradually lose this ability to relate to black students or the white teachers gradually gain the ability. In any event, you're saying that at some point in time black teachers cannot relate to black students any better than white teachers. If this is what you're saying, explain?

R: You have to remember that a lot of black teachers are just as "white" as some of the white teachers. And I don't believe that black students learn any more from them

than they learn from the white white teachers. As a matter of fact, if color interferes with the learning process, I would think that a black student experiences as much grief when he sees the black teacher (whom he sees as "white") refusing to take that extra step to help him as he does when the white teacher refuses to go the extra step.

Q: White teachers in black schools are guilty until proven innocent. Black teachers in the same schools are innocent until proven guilty. Would you agree?

R: I don't think I felt guilty. You think that all white teachers are guilty until proven innocent.

Q: Would you agree that white Americans generally see black Americans differently than they see other white Americans?

R: Like in situations concerning jobs?

Q: You think whites see blacks in the job market differently than they see other whites?

R: Years ago blacks were discriminated against much more than they are today. But today black people are much better educated. They are going more places and doing many more things. So things are different today. In the past the white person got the job, although he may have the same qualifications as the black applicant. Now I think it is about even. A black person with equal qualifications could get the job. I don't think there's as much discrimination as in the past.

Q: Is there some discrimination?

R: Yes. And there will always be some discrimination; but not only white to black or black to white discrimination. There will always be white to white and black to black discrimination.

Q: Is white to black discrimination the same as black to black discrimination?

R: Well, I really don't know. There are a lot of white people I don't like, and there may be some colored people I don't like. I don't really think that white to black is as bad.

Q: You seem to agree that there is some racial discrimination (or prejudice) in society generally. To what extent, if any, does it influence your performance as a teacher in a black school?

R: I don't think it has any influence on my performance.

Q: Do you think it has any influence on the students' behavior toward you?

R: It influences some of the students. One day I had an experience with a black parent, which may or may not have been due to my being white. I had kept about fifteen children in class because they had been very noisy. The mother came to the school and said, "I came to take my daughter home." Then she started swearing, screaming, ranting, and raving. She said she was going to have the black power or the black something after me; and that she was going to kick me in the "butt." A few days

later the daughter told me that her mother was sorry for what she had said in class. I didn't mind her using that language in front of me, but she should not have used it in front of those students. Perhaps she acted that way because of what's going on nowadays. Maybe she was just very militant. I don't know. But this kind of thing can influence children.

Q: Historically, numerous myths have floated across the country concerning black people. For example, blacks are innately inferior intellectually to whites; black men are hypersexual; black people are promiscuous; black people steal; blacks are lazy; etc. I call them myths because they are beliefs which have not been proven to be unique to blacks. Were you aware of the myths before going into the black school?

R: Yes, I had heard of most of them.

Q: Did they influence your performance as a teacher?

R: I didn't necessarily believe them. And I certainly don't think they influenced my teaching.

Q: Can you really determine whether or not they influenced your performance?

R: No.

Q: In your opinion, how does the black man perceive the white man today?

R: As definitely white, affluent, and coming from a culturally well-developed area. On the other hand, I'm sure he doesn't see the white man as perfectly good, ideal, and democratic; or as a person who doesn't steal. In short, both the black man and the white man stereotype each other.

Q: It's often said that teachers belong to the middle class. If this is true, do you see differences between black middle-class teachers and white middle-class teachers?

R: Only in that they live in different areas and attend a different school. Both black teachers and white teachers are essentially middle class; also, their children are middle class. In some of the black middle-class areas there are lower-class blacks moving in, and this is causing a great deal of concern to these people. The middle class came first, and they are worried about their property value. I think the color thing is too highly exaggerated. It's more economic than social. These blacks are afraid, just as whites are afraid of the lower class. You simply don't want a bunch of illiterates moving in.

Q: Is the academic achievement in black schools in the city significantly lower than the achievement in white schools? If so, can you account for the difference?

R: Only to some extent. Perhaps the instruction in black schools is not as good. But this would have to be only one factor. I would say that achievement in white schools in the city is about the same as achievement in black schools in the city. Achievement in white middle-class suburban schools is higher than achievement in white working-class suburban schools. And achievement in suburban schools is higher than achievement in schools in the city. This suggests that academic achievement is very closely related to family background and social climate, in addition to instruction.

Unfortunately, however, we still cannot account for the fact that achievement in schools attended by one ethnic group is somewhat higher than that in schools attended by another ethnic group, because we don't have a large enough black middle class to compare achievement in a black middle-class school with achievement in a white middle-class school.

Q: Suspensions and expulsions from black schools with majority-white faculties are much higher than in white schools. As you well know, a local teachers organization recently proposed that a school be established for students who are disruptive. What're your views on the disruptive school?

R: There's something good in a disruptive school. Many kids are in need of assistance – something like an unstructured school where they can adjust from the mess they are in psychologically. Besides, there are kids who just get horrendous in a structured classroom. If a kid cannot adjust to the structured situation, and the teacher can't fit him in any place, something should be done so that neither of them will suffer.

Q: What should white teachers be doing differently?

R: We need to be visiting more homes and talking to more of the parents. Every time I see parents at school functions I buttonhole them and tell them what their children are doing and what they should be doing better. But parents don't seem to feel the same needs as I do for getting the kids to become more aware of things – of learning in general. Most of the parents usually come to the school only to get their children reinstated after a suspension. I'm of the opinion that dragging parents into the school, making it more difficult for them, is the only way to help them make the kids toe the line.

Q: Do white teachers seek assistance from black teachers?

R: They should. Whether they do is something else. The interesting thing is that most teachers are basically white in their orientation. They have gone through a school which is largely white in philosophy. Looking at the reactions of teachers to kids, there is very little difference between black teachers and white teachers.

Q: If you were asked to give white teachers some tips for teaching in a black school, which tips would you give them?

R: Being friendly is definitely one. A white teacher can be much more distant in a white school than a black school; at least I was. Trust is very important. In general the white teachers don't trust the students, and vice versa. Honesty is also important. One day we were discussing symbolism in class. I had asked one student to tell us the meaning of a white symbol, and another student said, "K.K.K." Then we got into a discussion of the Klan. I told the class that my father belonged to the Ku Klux Klan, honestly telling the kids what I was all about, where I started from, and where I mean to go. Being able to accept criticisms is essential. One day I was about to discipline a student, and she told me that I didn't speak to her because she was black. As far as I was concerned, this was nonsensical because the whole class was black!

Q: The black model is essential in the black school. If the model is absent, is achievement affected?

R: I don't think achievement is necessarily affected simply because the model is absent. However, when the model is absent and, in addition, there is no one in the classroom who can identify with the students' problems, values, and habits, achievement becomes more difficult.

Q: Let me define racism as a belief that one ethnic group is superior to another ethnic group – superior socially, intellectually, economically, etc. Let me also say that racism is widespread among white teachers in the black school. Sometimes it's subconscious; sometimes conscious. Do you agree?

R: Anyone who says he's not a racist just doesn't understand the term. I think we are all racists, i.e., all white people. Children seem to learn from their parents, for example, that black people aren't as intellectually capable as white people. Racism is an integral part of the society, but it is mainly black people we are against. There seems to be a different kind of racism when white people who are not Jewish refer to Jewish people. They are bright but obnoxious; they can make money, but you hate to eat with them – that kind of racism. I don't know how you can grow up in our school system and not be racist.

Q: Does racism hinder a teacher's effectiveness?

R: This would depend on how you measure effectiveness. But I do believe that it affects overall performance. If the teacher is a racist as you have defined the term and the students are not achieving (for whatever reasons) there'll be a tendency for the teacher to attribute the lack of achievement to intellectual inferiority, and accept the performance. The teacher will seldom question his teaching methods, or his teaching materials, or himself, for that matter. Rather, he will take the attitude: What can you expect? I'm becoming very aware of the influence which the teacher's attitude has on the self-concept of students. And the attitude can not be hidden. If it is there it will be manifested in any form possible. And students will pick it up immediately – any student.

Q: What can white teachers do, if anything, to rid themselves of some of the racism?

R: I believe we must first become more aware of our upbringing. But people don't enjoy looking at themselves in a critical manner. Furthermore, they aren't very good at taking any criticism; so I think it will depend on each individual, what he has been exposed to, what has happened to him, and why it happened. This is crucial, for if the individual doesn't see the need to do it, it won't be done. But while I believe that it must be done by the individual, I also believe that very little can be expected from the older white teachers. Such turnabout in their whole character would be too unnatural. But even they can do at least one thing – not generalize. They can strive to accept every student for what they *know* the student to be.

Q: You say white teachers tend to see black students as being intellectually inferior. Do they also see black teachers as being intellectually inferior?

R: I don't think so, because they know the black teacher has also gone through

college. The black student is a completely different matter.

Q: Why do white teachers accept teaching assignments in a black school?

R: There are several reasons. Some of us accept the assignment because we want to teach there. Some because there is a vacancy. Others because they honestly believe that they can do a lot of good. I know some white teachers in black schools who don't need to work, but they are of the missionary type – they think they are trained to do good. Some say they teach in a black school because they like kids, not just black kids but kids in general. I would say that more than 50 percent of the white teachers in black schools are not there because they want to teach in the school.

Q: You included yourself among those white teachers who're teaching in black schools because they want to teach there. Specifically, why do you want to teach there?

R: Because I think I have something to offer black kids. They need someone who doesn't have all of the misconceptions that they come from crowded neighborhoods; they'll never get any bargains; by the time they reach seventh grade they will drop out of school; etc. They need the kind of teacher who believes that they can learn and who is willing to teach them. A couple of teachers on my floor often ask me: "What are you doing; why are you killing yourself?" But I'll "kill" myself for any group of kids that is assigned to me. I don't care whether he has a mother and father or whether he is living on twenty dollars a week.

Q: Can white teachers genuinely accept a black leader, e.g., the school principal?

R: Most of them can't, unless he is a superblack.

Q: Why?

R: White people see themselves as being in control generally. The feeling of being in control is something of a security blanket, and the thought of losing that blanket is very frightening. White teachers are no different in this respect.

Q: Can you genuinely accept a black leader?

R: I can say so, but it doesn't mean that I can. You would just have to observe me. I'm very much aware of my own feelings and have been working at this sort of thing for a couple of years. Yet there is always something which makes me want to see the race.

Q: Do white teachers invite black teachers to their homes for social functions, for instance dinner, particularly if they live in an all-white neighborhood?

R: I think so. Last Saturday night I had a party in my apartment for a mixed group, and I live in white suburbia. There was probably some static from the neighbors, but I think one can get away with this sort of thing today.

Q: You seem to attach some significance to a social relationship between black teachers and white teachers. Is this view shared widely among white teachers?

R: It would be difficult to say. I believe a large number of white teachers would say that a professional relationship during the school day is important, but fewer would agree that a social relationship after the school day is of educational value.

Q: Are you socially ostracized by your neighbors because you teach in a black school, invite black teachers to your apartment, etc.?

R: Ostracized only if I really cared whether or not they invited me to their homes. On the other hand, perhaps they enjoy having me around so they can ask questions; but they probably wouldn't get the answers they're looking for.

Q: Earlier you implied that many white teachers question the educational value of a social relation. Is it that they really question the educational value; or realize that it is still not fashionable for blacks and whites to move in the same social circle?

R: I think probably that's it. Basically, blacks and whites don't mix socially. But if teachers don't mix socially how can they possibly mix professionally?

Q: White teachers seem to segregate themselves during the school day. That is, they usually sit together in the cafeteria, faculty meetings, teachers lounge, etc. Why?

R: First of all, I think the older white teachers segregate themselves to a much greater extent than the younger white teachers. But, in general, many white teachers don't feel comfortable with a number of the black teachers. I was very uncomfortable with a couple of black teachers for a long time, but this changed gradually as I had more contacts with them. Incidentally, I took the initiative to bring about the contacts most of the time. Often we rode to and from school together; also, we met socially.

Q: A moment ago you said that you're no longer uncomfortable in the presence of black teachers. What's your perception of their perception of you?

R: They can't accept me completely because I'm white. And I am learning to accept it. They often seem to want to apologize for not accepting me completely. But when I sit in the teachers lounge and listen to all the negative things white teachers say about black students, even when black teachers are present, I really begin to understand why I'm not accepted completely. Hopefully, white people in general will also learn to accept this kind of thing, at least for the time being, since white America is almost entirely responsible for the situation. Nevertheless, I think it's bad. And blacks and whites will never learn to know one another if they continue to pull apart.

Q: Teaching styles can't be placed in neat bundles, but let me place them on a continuum ranging from the rigid teaching style to the permissive teaching style. Where would you place white teachers on the continuum? Black teachers?

R: I don't like to use the term "rigid," but I must. Black teachers (even the younger ones) are much more rigid than white teachers. They demand behavior that is consistent with what they think is good behavior – listening to the teacher; doing what the teacher says, and doing it on time. Black teachers often scold students and say things such as: "I can't stand for anybody to get out of his seat in this classroom!" or, "You don't talk out in this class!" I'd say they are successful in this way. But I

wouldn't say the students are learning any more than they are learning in other rooms. Black teachers can get away with this kind of thing, but white teachers can't. One reason is that black students don't trust us as much as they trust black teachers. I think their parents have told them not to trust the white teachers.

Q: You seem to be implying that white teachers are much more permissive than black teachers. If so, is it possible that their permissiveness is directly related to their fear of black students?

R: No. When people are afraid aren't they dogmatic rather than permissive? I think so. To me you're questioning the quality of education black students are getting under white teachers. Is this correct?

Q: Not necessarily. But many white teachers do seem reluctant to discipline black students, quite possibly due to fear of reprisal. They're unable to maintain a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to teaching and learning. They're afraid of becoming unpopular in the school, so they take the permissive route as a means of survival. Is this assessment of white teachers inaccurate?

R: Let me just say that in the beginning some students will try to frighten white teachers. Once I told a student to take his seat, and he said he was going to knock my teeth out. I told him my teeth were worth more than $2,000, and that it would cost him a pretty penny to knock out my teeth. Another kid was going to "take me apart" because I refused to give him something from my desk drawer. He threatened to spit in my face. All I'm saying is that black kids are only kids, and I don't think they frighten white teachers any more than they frighten black teachers.

Q: You seemed to have placed black teachers near the rigid end of the continuum and the white teachers near the permissive end. Using the same continuum, how would you characterize the learning styles of black students, again recognizing that learning styles can't be placed in neat bundles?

R: White teachers don't understand two or three things about black students. One is that black students seem to prefer an authoritarian approach to the permissive approach. If you are not strict with black students, they think you do not love them. So black teachers use this kind of approach much more frequently than white teachers, and they seem to be much more comfortable with it. When I taught in a white school most of the students came to class, took seats, and got ready for the class to begin. They didn't open books, but they did take out pencil and paper and waited for my instructions. Here the students come in and huddle together first, as if to plan something or get some kind of O.K. from their peers. Then they wait for me to say "Come on and sit down; there is work on the board for you to do." There is always a kind of looseness that I really can never pull together. Incidentally, it is always necessary to have something on the board to keep the class in order. This was not necessary in the white school.

Q: Assuming that black students prefer the authoritarian approach as you have suggested, perhaps it's because the black home is more authoritarian than the white home. If so, are white teachers attempting to change the life style of black students by

using the permissive approach?

R: I don't think we are trying to change their way of life. What I am saying is that you can control students by giving them a lot of busy work and keeping them quiet. The other day I walked around the school and looked into the rooms where the kids were nice and quiet and sitting at their desks. They were copying some work and feeding it back to the teacher. But they weren't learning anything. It just made me ill to watch this kind of thing.

Q: On the one hand you're saying that black teachers have a much more rigid teaching style than white teachers. On the other hand, you are saying that black students seem to prefer (or need) a more authoritarian approach, to use your label, than white students. Is it possible, then, that white teachers in black schools have many disciplinary problems because they have not adopted the authoritarian approach, to use your label once again?

R: Perhaps you hit the nail on the head. Let me tell you what has happened when I've tried to adopt that approach. Two or three times I've sounded as I think the students expected me to sound and got tremendous respect every time. Once I acted this way when somebody swiped tickets from me. This really made me angry. So for the next two or three days I said things in class such as: "Sit down!" "Be quiet!" "We will do this!" "We will do that!" Finally, one of the students came to me and said, "You're really working that into a storm, aren't you?" Well, that made me laugh. But I had gotten respect, although acting this way drained me. A person's insides are built a certain way. To ask me to act this way would be the same as asking the authoritarian teacher to go out in the suburbs and try to be the democratic type. This would be out of character for the teacher, and he would be torn to pieces. Oh, today I lost my temper as I have never lost it before, and I was amazed by the reaction of the class. I got a lot of respect for the remainder of the period. Nevertheless, I still contend that students must be allowed to become more self-directing, because they will have to be self-directing after they finish school.

Q: In your opinion, do white teachers expect black students not to be self-directing?

R: I hate to admit it; but I don't know as many white teachers as I should. I would say, and it's strictly a guess, that they probably have all kinds of weird ideas concerning the black schools. Too many of them come waving a flag as if they're going to save the world; and they think they are. However, something happens. They get a kind of slap in the face from students with: "We need you like a hole in the head!" And this is probably true. They fail to realize that the students need to be educated, not saved. Also they don't need to be looked on as being particular. Administrators often feel that white teachers really aren't an asset in the school, and the parents don't want many of them.

Q: Is the feeling of "sameness" important in the teaching-learning process?

R: I think so. I think it is very important initially. The emotions play an essential role in the learning process. Therefore, a student would probably establish an association with a person with the sameness more readily than the person without it. But once the student passes a certain point, the sameness becomes less important. If a white teacher

doesn't possess the sameness, I think it can be developed – at least a reasonable substitute.

Q: What kinds of things must white teachers do in order to develop this sameness?

R: In order to develop the sameness the teachers must really communicate with the students. Somehow they must say to the students, "I want what you want. I want something for you. I want to know you, and I want you to know me." In other words, there is some kind of identification process that should take place.

Q: White teachers in general have been accused of not planning lessons for their black charges. Some say the teachers leave school immediately after the end of the school day without books or other planning materials, return the next day, and wait for another day to end. If this is true, why aren't more white teachers planning lessons?

R: Some aren't planning because they really believe there is a limit to what you can teach these kids. Some black student teachers are in our school presently, and they've shown the regular teachers a lot. The student teachers are working very hard with the individualized instruction program, and the white teachers see this program doing things. The program requires a lot of work from the student teachers, and it wouldn't work otherwise. Some white teachers have the notion that teaching is an 8:30 to 3:30 job. They take some plans to the office at 1:30 on Friday. But that's as far as it goes. Some people don't go to the library, use visuals, or do any extra work. You don't see them going anyplace to ask anybody for materials for the kid who seems to have a perceptual problem. If it is not in that room, it won't be used. It's really frustrating to see the work most of the teachers give the students. It is all copy. So they merely learn to copy. These students don't need to learn how to copy. They need to learn how to be verbal and how to think.

Q: Are the older white teachers more effective than the younger white teachers?

R: I don't know if they are more effective. I think they are more willing to accept the conflict, and there is conflict. The kids don't like this. I think these kids resent the authority figure.

Q: Is the conflict possibly due to the fact that the teacher is white?

R: I'm not sure. I don't know.

Q: Was the conflict present, say, 15 years ago?

R: I think so; it just wasn't noticeable. These kids are more open about it now. They're open if they hate you; they're open if they love you. They have the attitude that we don't understand them; and whatever we try to present to them, they're going to turn us off. I had a black student say to me the other day, "All right, you have been telling us what is going on and you understand how we are having to live, but how do we know that we can trust you? How do I know that you really understand us?" I told him he wouldn't have been free enough to ask me that if he didn't trust me. Something very beautiful happened to me. I learned a lot. I learned more than they did about humanity, probably, and about the class.

Q: How much, if anything, did you know about the life style of black students before being assigned to a black school?

R: I guess I knew very little.

Q: Did the lack of knowledge hinder your effectiveness as a teacher?

R: Perhaps you are expecting me to say it did, but I don't think so. I learned a lot from my students: observing them in class, asking them questions about what they did after school, listening to their conversations, reading books, etc. If I found, for example, that a student had a lot of sisters and brothers, this would tell me something about how much attention the student was getting at home. I found that a student didn't get breakfast very often; so many times I brought cookies to school for him. Other teachers were also helpful in this way.

Q: How would you characterize the learning style of students in black schools in the city?

R: It seems to be basically of the oral-type. The students share their experience rather well orally. Information given by the teacher orally is generally understood. But most of them have difficulty expressing themselves in writing, reading with comprehension, or understanding material read to them. Further, learning in small groups seems to be more effective than learning in the entire class.

Q: How do black students perceive white teachers?

R: I wish I knew. One perceives reality. And if they perceive us – well, you know, you are a white teacher. And if that is their perception, that's reality to them; we are against them. To them that is reality, and you have to fight it.

Q: In view of the racial tension today, how does the white teacher develop trust for black student, and vice versa?

R: Talking about it is one way; by bringing it right out in the open. I'm white; you're black; and I don't hate you, unless you make me hate you as a person.

Q: White teachers generally have certain perceptions of black students, for example, as low achievers. And black students have certain perceptions of their teachers' perceptions of them. Is a student's behavior directly related to his perception of his teacher's perception of him?

R: At the beginning of last year I was told that one of my classes was relatively stupid; some of their teachers had been in tears; parents had had to call the school on many occasions; etc. I told the students that I had been told that they were relatively stupid. I also told them that I had learned from their records that they weren't stupid; rather, a bunch of clowns. That they were going to learn. And I was going to show the results to everybody to prove that the other people were just a bunch of phonies. I decided to start the class out below grade level because they were handicapped, not dumb. We worked very hard and achieved tremendous success. It got to be kind of a joke that the class was so good. One day a team of experts came to the school to study the class. The team observed the students in the class just before mine, and followed the class into my room. The team couldn't believe that it was the same class. I really

think the difference was due to the fact that I expected them to learn and like people. And they did. That's all.

Q: Mutual trust and respect between teacher and students are essentials in the teaching-learning process. Can black students be taught to trust and respect white teachers, and vice versa?

R: You can't teach trust and respect. You have to demand them.

Q: What're your views concerning the black community?

R: The community seems to place the teacher on a pedestal – whether black or white – because the teacher is important to the community. Recently, black teachers have received assignments in the white community, and the white community is very suspicious of the white child being taught by black teachers. White parents are afraid that their children will be taught violence or something from black teachers. Perhaps I'm naive, but I really don't believe the black community feels that the white teachers will teach the black students some of their traits.

Q: Should the teachers visit their students' homes?

R: I feel they should visit. If a white teacher can establish rapport with, say, one student and is invited to his home, the teacher can learn a lot if the teacher is willing to work with the student. But that is the problem. Most of the white teachers aren't willing to do this because they are afraid of losing face with their white friends in the school and outside the school. But as far as I'm concerned, they shouldn't be in the black school if they are not willing to take the extra step.

Q: Do you see a difference between the emphasis placed upon education in a black home and a white home?

R: Yes. White parents probably tell their children that they are in school to learn; and they must learn. I do not know what is said in the black home. But I see much more evidence of peer group influence in black schools than white schools. In the black schools the general feeling is that if a student answers a question he will be called a sissy.

Q: Allegedly, black parents are harassing white teachers simply because they're white. Do you agree?

R: Based on my experience with black parents, they are more concerned that their children get a good education than whether the teacher is black or white. I'm not saying the allegation is invalid; rather, it can't be proven based on my experience. In general, white people are somewhat on the defensive because black people are speaking out and fighting for their rights. And I can see how some white teachers may interpret this as harassment. If more black teachers were assigned to the schools and the white teachers could hear black parents saying to them the same kinds of things black parents are saying to white teachers, white teachers would probably be less likely to say that they were being harassed by black parents.

BLACK TEACHER: On White Teachers

Q: Why do white teachers teach in black schools?

R: Well, I think there are several reasons. Some teach in black schools if there are no vacancies in white schools when assignments are made. It's my understanding that students who receive national defense loans in college aren't required to return all of the money if they teach in an inner-city school. Several white teachers are on our faculty because they received national defense loans in college. In white schools teachers have parents to reckon with. The parents are more educated and vocal than parents in black schools; and they are much more aware of their rights concerning public education. Perhaps some of them teach in black schools because they feel they can get away with more things so far as parents are concerned. Others teach in black schools because they think they're dedicated to teaching black students, to upgrading black people. I refer to them as missionaries. Missionaries seem to have a feeling of guilt. And while I know neither the degree nor basis for the guilt, I do think they feel that teaching in black schools is a way to purge themselves. Obviously, there are some truly dedicated white teachers in black schools, but I think the group of missionaries is much larger.

Q: You seem to be implying that black parents must make more demands on white teachers. However, some people say that they are reluctant to do so. If they are reluctant, why?

R: Unfortunately, too many black parents over the age of 30 take the view that if the white man does something, it is right. You see, some black parents are still afraid to talk to white people or confront them about anything. I do see an extreme element of blacks, on the other hand, who would pop a white teacher in the mouth. So blacks are going through a psychological change – a change from here, the gut. Many young blacks are giving up on this system and getting killed. They are very intelligent, and we need them. But they can't wait. They can't sit down. It's a frustrating experience for them, and I am deeply sympathetic. We can't afford to lose them this way, for they are the ones who really would be making the changes ten years from now. Time is a most important factor.

Q: White teachers accept teaching assignments in black schools for financial reasons, not because they want to teach in the schools. As a matter of fact, they would rather not be in the schools. Do you agree?

R: Yes. Naturally, I think most of them would refuse to teach in black schools if they

could afford to do so financially. They simply can't afford the luxury of refusing to go. But many of them who can refuse do refuse.

Q: Are there other possible reasons why white teachers accept assignments in black schools?

R: They think they will not have to do a lot of teaching; that things will be fairly easy; that there will be very little pressure from the community, outside groups, etc., because nobody cares; that the administration will not insist on lesson plans being made. The situation in a black school is easier for white teachers to deal with than in a white school. They can report to a black school at 8:00, leave at 3:00, and not worry about anything. It is clear that they make neither the personal nor the professional commitment to teaching in black schools. I think they devote considerably less time to their teaching duties in a black school than a white school.

Q: Are white teachers as effective in black schools as black teachers?

R: Some black teachers are ineffective because they allow students to "run games" on them. But many more white teachers are ineffective for the same reason. Let me give you an example. If a student says, "I don't have my homework. I left it on the table at home;" many white teachers would accept this kind of thing over and over again. Now I wouldn't tell the student he didn't leave the assignment on the table. But when he says to me, "My homework assignment . . ."; I would interrupt and say, "Right, you left it on the table where you left it last week, and the week before that." I'm not telling him he didn't have the assignment, and I'm not hitting him over the head. But I am letting him know that he is not "going over." He probably would look at me and say, "Oh, wow." The next time he may even dig it up. When students continually lie and teachers continually say okay, they think they're "getting over" on the teachers. Most white teachers seem at a loss in this kind of thing. Let me give you another example. One day a teacher said in the teachers' lounge that one of her students called her a "white bitch" and made some other remarks about all of the "hunkies" while in her classroom. I asked her what she said to him. She replied, "What could I say?" I told her that I had been called a lot of names outside of my classroom, but that I would not allow a student to sit in my classroom and call me a black something. True, she is white; and I'm sure she has been called a lot of things simply because she is white. But she couldn't afford to stand there and say nothing. Saying something about the subject she was trying to teach the student would have been a good possibility. Here's another example. There was a fight in the white teacher's room next to mine. Now, fights don't just start: usually, students argue, someone is punched, and then the fight starts. If the teacher fails to stop it when the first punch is thrown, he is in deep trouble. Anyway, the teacher had tried unsuccessfully to stop the fight. On his way to look for a hall guard, he stopped in my room and said, "They've been fighting." I went to his room, opened the door, and said, "All right, everybody get these chairs in the aisles." The fighting stopped and the noise stopped – just like that! The students knew they were wrong. But, again, it was sort of like running a game. Students know it's wrong, for example, to throw chairs. However, the teacher allowed them to reach this point. Perhaps this was logical to him. Most disciplinary problems I've seen get started in this manner.

Q: Do white teachers lack the necessary motivation to teach in black schools?

R: That's right. They seem to take the position that society hasn't committed itself to black students; therefore, they need not be committed. You see, there must be a felt need to be in a black school. And the need must be motivated either extrinsically or intrinsically. I think the need is very much lacking. In other words, there's nothing present to be motivated.

Q: Attempts have been made to see differences between older white teachers and younger white teachers in black schools. Do you really see differences?

R: Definitely. Many of the older teachers are still holding to numerous stereotypes. The younger teachers are much more willing to admit their prejudices and try to seek assistance. But the older white teachers are still part of the system. They are not willing to change. They are saying, "This is the way it has to be. It's been this way for twenty years, and I'm going to continue for the next five or six years, or for as long as I'm here.

Q: White teachers are unaware of their racial prejudices; and the lack of knowledge presents certain problems for them. Do you agree?

R: Some of them aren't aware of their racial prejudices. And others attempt to cover with statements such as, "My best friends are black." Some even spend time trying to convince blacks that they aren't racists, instead of being natural. White teachers don't seem relaxed around black students and teachers, and they are always on the defensive. Many times they create problems unnecessarily by not relaxing themselves.

Q: White teachers often say, "I invite blacks to my home all the time." Is this an indication that they are liberal in their thinking?

R: Who are they kidding? Are you talking about teachers who honestly invite black teachers to their homes; teachers who know their feelings toward blacks and try to hide them; or teachers who don't realize that the feelings are there? If I ask white teachers whether or not they're completely liberal, and they tell me they are, I would tell them I'm not. I would admit that I'm a racist. I dig black people to death, and I don't dig white people.

Q: Do teachers segregate themselves – black teachers in one group and white teachers in a different group – in the school cafeteria, teachers' lounge, etc.?

R: I'd say the younger teachers don't segregate themselves too much. Since we don't have a cafeteria in our school, some of the black teachers and a few of the white teachers go to the neighborhood center for lunch. A friend and I have often discussed this. We wondered whether the white teachers were sincere in going to the center; or whether they were just going to make it appear that they were helping business in the black community.

Q: A number of black teachers, at least, have said that faculty members in black schools segregate themselves along racial lines. Is this true?

R: By nature we are all ethnically clannish. This goes for blacks, whites, or any other

ethnic group. Of course, we have our friends outside our immediate grouping, but we're clannish. I never will forget when a gorgeous bus station was built in New Orleans several years ago. There were no signs with "Colored" and "White." However, within one week the blacks were sitting on one side of the station and the whites were sitting on the other side. We just gravitate towards our own.

Q: Are social activities of worthwhile value to a faculty?

R: Yes.

Q: Is it possible that the role white teachers are expected to play in black schools during the day is in conflict with the role they play after school?

R: That's quite true. White teachers will have to be told that their living styles may not change, and how they deal with their suburban friends may not change; but, doggone it, when they are in the classroom certain kinds of attitudes must take place. I know this is very difficult; and I know it often is not possible to be a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. However, the need exists to develop some kind of attitudinal scale to be used by administrators and personnel officers who hire certain teachers for certain areas. It may also be desirable to hold administrators and personnel officers accountable to some extent for the performance of teachers whom they assign to black schools. All of this would be very hard to do, and I don't really know how to go about doing it. But I think we're going to have to work very hard.

Q: Do white teachers encounter problems in black schools that they would not encounter in white schools? If so, what're some of the problems?

R: They have problems accepting certain religious views and philosophies being taught to black students. For example, they don't seem to accept the Muslim religion as part of the background of some of the students and try to relate their learning activities accordingly. The Black Panthers are very strong in our school community, and children are being taught different things that whites have done to us over the years. Have you seen one of the Black Panthers' newspapers? Anyway, students bring them to school, and as far as most white teachers are concerned, students who bring them to school are no good. The other day a white teacher held one of the papers up in front of the class and asked, "Is this what all of us are dying for, for things like this?" In my opinion, she didn't accept the fact that she had anything to do with the making of that newspaper. She felt that there was thanks to be shown by black people to white people for what blacks do have, and bringing this kind of newspaper to class wasn't the way to express thanks. So she condemned the paper, anyone associated with it, and anyone who brought a copy to class.

Q: What advice would you give to white teachers concerning publications such as the one by Black Panthers?

R: They must be able to see such publications as being equal to the *Christian Science Monitor*, some of their Catholic papers, some of the lily-white papers published by various clubs, etc. They must also try to realize that it's a bit disconcerting to black students, to say the least, to look through an entire publication without seeing any pictures of black people. One day I decided to develop a lesson around materials in

magazines. The first thing one of the students asked was: "Why did you bring all these whitey magazines and only a few *Ebony* magazines?" I explained that *Ebony* was a monthly publication and some of the other magazines were published two and three times monthly. It may sound a bit farfetched, but after the explanation the students kind of changed their attitudes about the magzines and continued to use them for the original purpose. But then I noticed that some of them were looking for pictures in the *Ebony* magazines. Somebody saw a picture of Bill Cosby, I think, and everybody wanted that picture.

Q: White teachers have been accused of saying little things, consciously or otherwise, that turn off blacks. What're some of these things?

R: I'm really turned off when they refer to black people as "you people." It would appear that they think we are a different kind of people. Many of them also refuse to refer to students by their given names. And I have been quite vocal on this in the teachers' lounge. Let's say a student is named Michelle. They'll refer to the student as, say, "Susie" and think this is cute! One day a white teacher said to me, "We just think it's cute." And I told the teacher I was glad that I didn't have a child in her classroom, because I didn't want anyone calling any of my children by anything other than their given names. I have noticed that some white teachers allow the students to refer to them as "teacher," rather than by their names.

Q: Students tend to mimic their teachers. Furthermore, they often draw conclusions concerning their teachers based upon various observations, for example, the teachers' manner of dress. Would you comment briefly on the white teachers' manner of dress?

R: Some of them don't care about their manner of dress. They walk around the school in tennis shoes, house shoes, etc. And students laugh at them. Teachers should not be frowzy just because students may be frowzy. They should still dress as teachers, always keeping themselves presentable. I think some of them believe it's all right for them to dress as they dress simply because they're in a black school.

Q: If you were principal of a black school and the faculty was predominantly white, what kinds of things would you want to accomplish?

R: I would petition the board of education to have time set aside at the beginning of the year so the faculty could get away for some type of seminar. This would give them a chance to understand one another better, and it would also give me an opportunity to let them know just what I expect of them. Most white teachers are hung up on not being able to use corporal punishment. Just the other day I told a white teacher that white teachers have to be much more careful when using corporal punishment than the black teachers, because of the general feeling that white teachers are guilty until proven innocent. However, one white male teacher in our school can use corporal punishment without the students and parents seeing it as a white person manhandling black students — even if he loses his temper. He understands the students. They accept him as a person. If he grabs a student, it's because he got angry, not because of his white ideas. There is another teacher in the school whom the students call a "white bitch." If she were to grab a student, the students would say she did it because of her racist attitudes. They would say she is white and doesn't understand them. This could cause parents to come to the school.

Q: Would it help to have many more black teachers in black schools?

R: I think so. I think we need more black teachers. I'd say only the few white teachers who're sincere should be in black schools. But the real answer to the question seems to be based on two different points of view. If one takes the view that the city, and therefore black schools and black communities in the city, will eventually be in a grave – all right, fine – then white teachers have a place in black schools. They're working toward this. But if we work in opposite directions – which is what we have been doing – so that our society will become more segregated than integrated, then it's realistic to want black teachers for black students, because the students will be going into a black society. As far as that society is concerned, take a group of black students out of a black community, show them a group of white people, and they have no reference point in which to place white people. For the most part, many of the students see white people only when they walk into the school. The reality is that we've got a black society and a black school that ought to have black teachers

Q: Much of the racial turmoil across the country is often reported in the news media, particularly television and newspaper. Do the media contribute to the difficulty that white teachers have in black schools?

R: They probably do. But I would say that other materials read by white teachers contribute more to the difficulty. An excellent example of this is the materials pertaining to the "culturally deprived." Most white teachers in our schools feel that it's important for them to become familiar with the community and the people. So they pick up a book on the culturally deprived and read it. They are of the opinion that most of the students in their classes have not had breakfast. They tend to feel sorry for the students. And they conclude that the students "don't come to us with anything." Well, we've been going to school for 300 years without breakfast in our stomachs. We can learn. You can't feel sorry.

Q: A moment ago you said white teachers are reading the wrong kinds of materials concerning blacks; also, black students can learn without having had breakfast. What must be done in order to convince white teachers that the students can learn without, for example, having had breakfast?

R: Among other things, we must change our method of educating them. Probably a better method would be to identify white prospective teachers at the sophomore or junior level and place them in black schools so that they would have close contact with students and the community. Allow them to find out what actually is going on in the inner-city school.

Q: The union has been accused of protecting incompetent white teachers. Is this true?

R: First of all, white teachers are incompetent because they don't care; because they are in black schools only for the money. Their primary reason for joining the union is to get more money. And the union is asking for money when it should be asking for things of more educational value. The things in the grievances that are of educational value are usually red herrings – for instance, smaller class size. If white teachers could stop thinking that they are in the schools for the money and begin thinking that they're there in order to educate black boys and girls, then they wouldn't belong to

the union. Some of us are constantly pressured to join the union. They pressure me daily. But only two of the six black teachers in our school belong.

Q: How do black teachers perceive white teachers?

R: In the past, white teachers in black schools seemed more sincere than today. Today, I just feel that most of them are in black schools because they need the job. I would say that the feeling of sincerity among white teachers began to change after the many racial incidents across the country – most of which were blown out of proportion by the news media. The perception, then, seems to be one of mistrust. However, it is changing positively slowly. I have tried to say to white teachers that everything they read about blacks is not necessarily true. Furthermore, I've tried to remind them of many of the incidents by the Ku Klux Klan, in particular; the Emmett Till incident; etc.

Q: How do white teachers perceive black teachers?

R: Most of them accept black teachers as being competent in black schools. But when black teachers begin to move up the ladder white teachers don't give them the same respect that they give other whites. I've never taught in a white school, so I can't say how black teachers are perceived in white schools by white teachers. However, I had a few white friends in graduate school, and although this kind of discussion never came up, they pretty much accepted me as the superior colored they knew – you know!

Q: Can you say in general terms how black students perceive black teachers? White teachers?

R: I would have to say black students see black teachers as being more dedicated than white teachers. I believe the black teachers have as much or more at stake than black students; and they have more at stake than white teachers. Basically, black teachers are in the same hole as black students. The students know that white teachers don't live, for example, in the black community. Rather, they come in only for a few hours a day.

Q: White teachers have often been accused of not being able to maintain a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. Would you respond to this accusation?

R: I know some white teachers who're able to maintain this kind of atmosphere. But the average white teacher can't, due to his racist attitudes primarily. About one-third of our faculty is black. And the black teachers have very few disciplinary problems. They are able to cope with the students. They seem to have more understanding than the white teachers. White teachers are frequently clashing with the black students. They create many of their problems.

Q: Do you agree that white teachers permit black students to do what they want to do rather than encourage them to do what they need to do? If so, why?

R: This goes back to the attitudes of many teachers, white teachers in particular, that black students just cannot learn. So they ask themselves: What's the point in trying to teach them? Many white teachers drive to black schools from suburbia – sometimes

driving through much of a neighborhood in order to reach the school. They see parents on the streets – some perhaps drunk – and probably conclude that their children are not going to be anything; and teachers shouldn't knock themselves out trying to teach the students when they can't learn. This is one kind of response. The matter of testing should also be mentioned. Too many of the white teachers are of the opinion that black students can't be expected to reach the average in testing. So why teach them? People such as Jensen, who says that we are generally inferior to whites, contribute to this kind of thinking by white teachers. They read such garbage and believe it. A third response pertains to the attitude of the administration toward black students. It too is one of: "They can't learn; just keep them quiet; keep them out of trouble;" etc. And this kind of attitude also filters down to the teachers.

Q: How does turnover affect student growth and development?

R: It takes two or three years for a teacher to develop a kind of temper in a classroom. Afterwards, students basically know what to expect from the teacher and vice versa, so far as the educational program is concerned. When the teacher leaves, the entire program is disrupted, and the new teacher is forced to begin from the beginning.

Q: There are those who believe that the turnover rate among white teachers in black schools is very high and it has an affect on the growth and development of the students. Would you say the statement is accurate?

R: I think so. But let me go one step further. Many of them are abusing the sick-day policy; therefore, the growth and development is also affected by absenteeism. Some teachers have a pattern of being absent, for example, every Wednesday or every Friday. They don't exceed the limit, but they do use all of the days. It isn't uncommon to hear comments such as, "I just had to take a little rest." I was talking to the principal of a black high school the other day, and he had 15 substitutes in his building one day! Everything was a total mess.

Q: Teacher-student rapport is most essential in the learning process. What must white teachers do in order to develop the rapport?

R: They must show the students that they care, and care must be measured in terms of the things happening in the room that will help to bring about positive changes in the lives of the students. In order to do this, the teachers must be well organized, efforts must be made to learn the students individually, and the like. Too many white teachers get caught-up in trying to become popular with black students. They buy the students candy, ride them in their car, take them home, and the like. Then the students talk about the teachers because they aren't learning anything in school.

Q: The term "relevant" is often used by black students and teachers. What kinds of things must be done in order for a teacher's planning to be relevant?

R: In today's school the teacher must work out some things with the students in order to find out what their interests are. Learning must be made more personal. That is, the lessons must include more of the experiences of students. These kinds of lessons provide an excellent opportunity for many of the students to talk to the teacher about themselves. Perhaps more importantly, however, the lessons enable the teacher to better understand the students.

Q: Some white teachers say black students seldom turn in homework assignments. If this is true, what can the teachers do?

R: They can call home. They can do a number of things. But the point is that homework should be given with a definite educational purpose in mind; rather than for the purpose of giving students busywork. And when it's given, they must be willing to establish some alternatives for students who fail to turn in their assignments. Homework is essential for two reasons. One, it allows parents to see the kind of work that is being done in the classroom. Two, it gives students some badly needed practice.

Q: Can you describe the kind of relationship that exists between white male teachers and black male students?

R: White male teachers seem to respect black male athletes. So I would say the relationship between them is not a bad one. In the classroom, the white male teachers are doing the same things white female teachers are doing – making a day. I don't think they are putting down too many young black males at this stage of the game. However, they have the white ideology in the back of their minds all the time.

Q: Do white teachers in black schools see their assignments as undesirable?

R: They don't see it as undesirable. But they do think they really don't have to work hard. And they don't work as hard and put in as much time in that black school as they would in a white school. White parents put a lot of pressure on teachers, much more than black parents. An assignment in a black school is personally demanding for white teachers, because they really feel uncomfortable in the school. Even if they were in a poor white school they wouldn't feel as uncomfortable, because they would still have more things in common with the white students than the black students. Furthermore, they perhaps feel a greater need to help a poor white person than a poor black person.

Q: Are the credentials of white teachers assigned to white schools superior to those of white teachers assigned to teach in black schools?

R: Probably not. If two white teachers apply for positions in the same school system, and one has a higher academic average than the other, it's doubtful that the board of education would assign the teacher with the higher grades to a white school and the other teacher to a black school based solely on the color of the schools. However, I do believe that teacher expectations would be highly affected by the color of the schools. The teacher going to the white school would expect to have to be on the ball or lose his job. Not so for the teacher going to the black school: he can just be adequate.

Q: Teaching is both an art and a science. With respect to an art, the human touch is a tremendous essential. Do white teachers possess this touch?

R: No. They just don't have it. Perhaps it can be acquired as a result of behavior modification. However, the big question is: Can we modify behavior without making white teachers a bunch of phonies. Black students immediately recognize phonies, do-gooders, Christ-like figures, etc., who come in to save poor little black students. Looking at the matter optimistically, I think we've got to try to modify the behavior. We've got to build in more humanism. But the psyche is a complex kind of thing.

Further, the cognitive styles of teaching – whether teaching accounting, biology, chemistry, Shakespeare, etc. – can't be separated from the personality, attitudes, and psychological makeup of the teacher. The attitudes concerning black people in general are widespread, and they filter down to the students. Society has made us funny objects, uncivilized. Animalistic tendencies have been attributed to us. We are supposed to create a kind of fear in the white man. And there continues to be an area of wonderment. For example, "I wonder if they really are capable of learning." Therefore, many of the white teachers are defeated before they begin. Again, the question of whether or not their behavior can be modified is crucial.

Q: Today, there seems to be more open hostility between blacks and whites than prior to the civil rights movement. Are white teachers secure enough in themselves to discuss the hostility openly and freely, or do they attempt to sweep it under the rug?

R: They attempt to sweep it under the rug.

Q: Then, does the unwillingness to accept reality create some problems for them?

R: We can work with some of them, and it won't help – until they die off.

Q: Why aren't white teachers willing to face reality? Is it because they don't see the reality; or because they see the reality and are afraid of it?

R: The reality is too big to miss. Furthermore, students are quite aware of it. It's impossible for a white teacher to walk into a black school without noticing that everyone is black. If the teacher discusses the first racial issue freely, that's it! The issue probably will not be raised again. But when the teacher skirts the first issue because he feels that racial issues are touchy, or because he isn't sure just how he would handle himself, he is in trouble. I think the white teacher must be honest enough to say to his black students, "All right, I'm here, and I'm being honest with you. I know I'm white. You know I'm white. So what?" And he won't make it until he can establish this kind of understanding. White teachers can do this if they have the right kind of personality, if they're sincere. But they'll have to be sincere. I have always been sort of a brutally honest type of person. And I find that students want to know where you are. If they don't know, then they don't turn over their trust to you. If they don't trust you, then you can't teach them anything.

Q: How do black parents perceive white teachers?

R: Recently, a mother came to the school because her son had failed my class. My student teacher (white) was in the room when she arrived. The mother tried to climb the wall. I don't know whether she tried to do so because she saw the white student teacher, assumed that he was the regular teacher, and concluded that her son was right and no racist so-and-so was going to say he was wrong; or, she was just upset about the grade. Anyway, the student teacher dashed down the hall and said to me, "There's a woman in the room!" I went to the room and the mother and I had a very pleasant discussion, possibly because she had released all of her tensions before I arrived. The student teacher did not come in the room while the parent was present. Instead, he remained outside. During the discussion we found that the student had taken home his "B" paper but hadn't taken home his "F" papers. The mother left the school upset

with the student. Black students live in somewhat of a closed society because of their limited contacts with white people, so many of them don't really know that there are people who don't like them simply because they're black. But their parents know this. They often don't get the job they should have because they're black. They often don't get the promotion they should get because they're black. They often don't get the salary they should get because they're black. So parents know the reality of the situation. Consequently, when they see somebody white they're angry anyway. It's similar to a bull who sees a red flannel shirt.

Q: White teachers have been accused of telling black parents what they think parents want to know concerning academic progress of their children, rather than what parents need to know. Is the accusation valid?

R: Not too many white teachers in our school lie to parents or cover up the truth. But they don't always tell the whole truth. If a student is in the third grade, they'd simply say to a parent that the student, for example, is in the top reading group and doing very well. However, they would not tell the parent that the group is reading in a second grade reader. There is a big difference.

Q: The phrase "in loco parentis" is often used in education, meaning in the place of a parent. Perhaps black teachers can feel as close to black students as they feel toward their own children. Can white teachers do this?

R: No, it would be hard. I've observed white teachers in the elementary grades holding students on their laps and hugging them, etc. But one could tell by their facial expressions that the feeling of belonging was missing. I have always felt that a teacher need not sit and hold a student, anyway, in order for him to feel that he is loved. Furthermore, it's not good to sit him on your lap one day and shove him around the next day.

Q: Are white teachers committed to the improvement of black schools?

R: No. They are not committed. But they are being paid, and the parents and the community should require them to earn that pay. There should be an open-door policy whereby the parents could just walk in and sit down in the classroom. If they find that a teacher is not doing his job, parents must then demand that it be done. Black educators have a responsibility in this regard but fail to carry it out due to fear. We're afraid of being ostracized by our workers and co-workers; afraid of not being promoted; etc.

Q: White teachers in a black school are guilty until they prove themselves innocent. Black teachers in the same school are innocent until they prove themselves guilty. If white teachers are guilty, they are guilty of what?

R: They are guilty of having white attitudes toward blacks. Students think of them as "whitey" initially because in their opinion white teachers don't understand black people; they think black people are dumb; and they think black students come to school unprepared. They can prove their innocence by demonstrating the ability to teach in a black school effectively without being unduly influenced by ingrained racist tendencies. To the extent that black students don't see white skin, it's nonexistent for

the most part. In other words, if a white teacher is teaching effectively, the students can accept him as their teacher. If a black teacher is not teaching effectively, they won't accept him as their teacher. However, if the teacher is black, their initial reaction would be that he is okay, he's "together." I attended public schools in the North and didn't have any black teachers! If I had had a black teacher, I would have assumed that he was "together;" that he knew me, and we understood each other; that he was all right. There would have been a difference.

Q: The term "myths" is often used to refer to beliefs that can't be proven. The literature is replete with myths concerning black people. For example, black people are innately inferior to white people. In your opinion, do white teachers harbor myths in their minds concerning black people?

R: If so, they don't express them in the school. Perhaps they express them in their community.

Q: Do black teachers and white teachers have basically the same teaching style?

R: On first impulse I would say the teaching styles are about the same, simply because they have been trained by some of the same people. However, I think black teachers bring to the learning situation something that white teachers don't have. Perhaps that something is identity; perhaps it is something else. Anyway, black teachers can feel a sense of belonging. They can empathize with the black students, for their plight in the society has been basically the same as the plight of their students. Identity, a sense of belonging, empathy, etc., facilitate learning, I think.

Q: Do black students have a unique learning style?

R: I hesitate to say they have a unique learning style, for so much depends on how well the teacher knows them. I do feel, however, that for some of them continuous phrasing of a problem or situation – saying the same thing in many different ways – is very essential. There are those who believe that black people have not been exposed to abstract thinking. Others believe that not only have they not been exposed, they don't have the mental capacity to think in an abstract manner. Obviously, I don't agree with this line of thinking. But I do agree that there comes a time when the teacher should begin at the level of repetition and move gradually to other levels of teaching.

Q: The excellent teacher has a variety of tricks, and many of them are based upon his past experiences – from birth. If he's having difficulty explaining something to one of his students, he reaches into the bag, pulls out a new trick, and tries to explain it another way. Whether or not the trick is effective depends largely upon the extent to which it is related to the student's experiences – from birth. Since the past experiences of black teachers and black students are much more similar than the past experiences of white teachers and black students, it follows that the tricks in a black teacher's bag are more meaningful in the teaching-learning process than those in a white teacher's bag. Is teaching effectiveness in some way related to this bag of tricks?

R: I think so. The only difficulty with your statements is that you're dealing with one teacher who's dealing with approximately 35 students, and he has to be interesting and informative enough to meet the needs of all of them, which is almost impossible.

However, I do believe that black teachers are in a better position to know what would be of interest to black students than white teachers, because they probably have gone through similar situations. A white teacher draws from his knowledge and background. How many white teachers do you know who have been brought up in a black environment?

Q: Is the behavior of black students influenced by the color of the teacher's skin?

R: Before responding, let me make some general comments. If students think they can "get over," they will try to do so. They will try to "get over" with white teachers because of their perception of white teachers' attitudes toward them. They are less likely to try to "get over" with black teachers, because they know that our backgrounds are similar to theirs. However, if they feel out a black teacher and find that they can "get over," they will try. Now, let me respond to the question. In general, the white teachers are not honest enough with black students. When students are doing poorly, they should be told that they are doing poorly rather than be told that they're not doing as well as they should be doing. Sometimes I ask students: What happened to you this morning? They go into a long explanation; and I honestly tell them that they can do a lot better and to get on the ball. If a class is giving the teacher a headache, the teacher ought to say to the students, "Look, you're driving me crazy." This gives the teacher a chance to blow off some steam; and it gives the students a chance to see the teacher with some degree of reality.

Q: In your judgment, what is the attitude of white teachers in black schools toward the students, parents, and black people in general?

R: I get the feeling it's one of tolerance rather than one of acceptance. One can almost sense that teaching in a black school is not something most of them want to do. Even students can sense this, based on certain statements made by teachers such as, "You're ignorant."

Q: At best, white teachers contribute only to the intellectual growth of black students. Do you agree?

R: I agree 100 percent. As I look back I can see only two white teachers who provided more than intellectual stimulation for black students. Some white teachers are telling me they don't think it's necessary, that they only need to do the teaching. Perhaps I've been missing the boat.

Q: Do you agree that white teachers and black students come from and live in two different worlds, and that the two worlds are in constant conflict?

R: Yes. But learning would still take place if the teachers were willing to admit the differences and strive to bridge the gap. As a matter of fact, many of them seem unwilling to admit that they are white! They must learn to say to the students firmly, "Yes, I'm white – big deal. Now, where is your English theme?" Or, "Did you pass the biology exam yesterday?"

Q: Recently, a white teacher said to me, "I see my students as students. I don't see them as black students. I don't see any color. I see them as students and relate to them

accordingly, just as I would relate to any other students." How would you react to these statements?

R: White teachers can't feel the love for black students that they would feel for white students. They look upon white students as "sheep from their pasture." They look upon black students as not being there at all. They are not concerned about black students.

Q: It has been said that black students will readily accept the effective white teacher. Who is the effective white teacher?

R: If we had the answer to that question, we could make a million dollars. Let me just say most white people grow up believing that black is bad and white is good. So the effective white teacher is one who has been able to rid himself of this kind of belief. The effective white teacher also respects black students.

Q: White teachers often permit students to do whatever the students want to do in the classroom, instead of having the students do certain things which they need to do. To what extent, if at all, is the statement valid?

R: Too frequently white teachers give black students time to do their own thing. They can read comic books or do almost anything else, so long as they are quiet and don't get in the teacher's hair. I think this is absolutely horrible, really. First of all, some students do need more respect, flexibility, friendliness, calmness – and all these things – than other students. But they also need some structure. They need to know the educational goals they will attempt to achieve on a given day and how they will be evaluated. They also need to know that the classroom is not the place for recreation. They need to know that they must do some things in the classroom which are not necessarily things that they want to do. I'm not saying that black students must be spoon-fed. But they do need a sense of direction from the teacher. They don't need to just come in and sit and play.

Q: The number of students graduating from black high schools in the city and going on to college is much lower than the number graduating from white high schools and going on to college. Further, more of the black students drop out for academic reasons. Why?

R: Black students are being destroyed by white teachers. This doesn't mean that they are totally responsible. But their attitude toward teaching in black schools is a major factor. If 21 students go to college, 19 are back home prior to the beginning of the Christmas season for academic reasons. The students are just not prepared. They can't compete. And in order to solve the problem teacher attitudes must be modified first. Not long ago, a parent came to our school and, later, cried for about 15 minutes because of the attitude of a white nurse. What the nurse had done wasn't so bad, but her attitude was terrible. She had given the impression that she was so superior and the parent was "just a colored woman." I constantly get a kind of vibration from most white teachers that "after all, somebody must do the service work!"

Q: What're your general impressions concerning the white male teacher's ability to teach black students?

R: He feels that he is better equipped than the black male teacher. He feels superior. He thinks he's the best teacher in the building and constantly pats himself on the back about how good he is and what he is doing in the classroom. Needless to say, it's not evident that he is doing anything.

Q: In your opinion, how do black students perceive white male teachers – particularly male students?

R: Black students perceive any teacher positively who's doing his job. But some white male teachers seem to want to befriend rather than educate black students. Male students soon realize this and become frustrated, because they know that one day they're going to have to support a family and will not be totally prepared.

Q: White teachers say black teachers expect too much from black students. Black teachers say white teachers expect too little. How do you see it?

R: Without a doubt, black teachers expect much more from black students than white teachers. One reason is that black teachers have a vested interest in the education of black students and feel it incumbent upon them to expect the students to achieve their potential. Another is that the expectations of black teachers and white teachers have different bases. Black teachers know, for example, that too little emphasis is placed on education in black homes; and they also know that the school must compensate. So the expectations of black teachers are based upon their knowledge of the backgrounds of the students and the realization that the school must compensate for shortcomings in their backgrounds. White teachers have a limited knowledge concerning the backgrounds of black students. And most of their expectations are based upon stereotypes: all blacks are slow; they really don't want to learn; they're mainly maids and chauffeurs; they're trash and maintenance men; etc. On the other hand, a few white teachers come to our school expecting too much from the students. This doesn't mean that the students don't have the ability; rather, teachers are unaware of the students' handicaps. In general, I would say white people just don't believe that black people have as much potential as white people.

Q: It's my understanding that faculties in black schools in the city have been majority or all-white historically. If this is true, shouldn't white teachers be blamed for the low achievement in the schools?

R: I agree that white teachers must accept part of the blame. But white counselors and white principals ought to be blamed first. They won't allow black students to dream of becoming anything worthwhile; rather, they tell them what to dream. One day a student in our school asked one of the counselors to help her complete an application for college. The counselor said, "How can you go to college? I told you that you are not college material. How can you go to college when you can't fill out an application. You want me to fill out an application for you? Since you're the one going to college; you fill it out." All the counselor had to say was, "Come into my office, and I will help you."

Q: Students in white schools learn in spite of teachers; but students in black schools learn because of teachers. Do you agree with the statement?

R: There's some truth to the statement. White students come to school with many more motivational attitudes (for instance, a business executive in the family) already built in than black students. So teachers in black schools have to try to overcome both societal and individual handicaps much more often than teachers in white schools. In some ways this seems unfair to teachers in black schools, yet it's certainly a part of their responsibility as teachers.

Q: Black schools in the city have majority-white faculties. What're your views on majority-white faculties in black schools?

R: First, there are very few black models in the schools with whom the students can identify. Black students need to see someone from their race teaching them; someone who has made it; someone who understands them. Seeing all white teachers says something to black students about people of their race and the students' ability to become members of the teaching profession. Second, white teachers are not committed professionally, educationally, personally, etc. to helping black students develop to their potential. I know this is a pretty broad statement, and I'm sure some of them are committed; but I'm looking at the majority. As far as the majority of the white teachers are concerned, the students can't learn, and there's little need of teaching them. It's kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy. With this kind of attitude, students certainly can't learn.

Q: What would happen if we identify white teachers who do not have those negative attitudes?

R: This would improve the situation tremendously. But how do we change attitudes that society has impressed on the minds of white people and black people. We must deal with this question first, since white teachers primarily are being sent to black schools.

Q: Do white teachers devote as much time to actual teaching as they would devote in a white school?

R: No. They don't have to. In the black school they can always use the excuse that the kids are bad. Or, they don't like white people. Furthermore, supervisors seldom visit black schools.

Q: Is it true that white teachers are tolerated, at best, by black students and their parents?

R: Well, white teachers are not accepted with open arms. But I do think it's a bit more than toleration. Contrary to what many whites believe, black parents want the best possible education for their children. However, many of them have come to the conclusion that many white teachers are in black schools simply because there are so few black teachers. The feeling toward white teachers is due to the times in which we live, and I don't know when it's going to change.

Q: Do black educators have at least a moral obligation to help black parents understand more fully the plight of their children educationally?

R: I think so – whether this means organizing them, or doing something else. I feel

obligated to do whatever I can in my little sphere, to say that these teachers certainly are not adequate to teach black students. Black educators have both the knowledge and responsibility; and if we simply sit back and say certain things are wrong, we are almost as criminal as the teachers who are doing all these things.

Q: Are white teachers psychologically ready to accept black leadership, for instance, the black principal?

R: Blacks assigned to leadership positions are superior in many respects; therefore, white teachers are willing to accept them professionally. I'm not saying that they've not encountered resistance along the line. Rather, they probably have been accepted on the job, but they have to be superblacks. This is the same way it is all the way through.

Q: Do white teachers spend enough time planning lessons?

R: The ones I know spend a lot of time, but I don't think they get the kind of results they could get, because of their attitude. For example, there's a look of disgust on their faces as the students enter the classroom – as if to say, "Another day!" They should be standing near the door greeting the students, instead. I have visited classes taught by white teachers and found four or five students just sitting in the back. Once I talked with three students and became very upset after finding that they knew very little about what was going on in class. They attended class only occasionally. According to the students, the teacher had promised them a "D" for coming to class!

Q: Black teachers can be of tremendous assistance to white teachers in black schools, but white teachers should take the initiative to seek the assistance. Are they willing to do this?

R: For the most part, the younger teachers are willing to do this. I don't know about the older white teachers – those who have been in black schools for ten or fifteen years. Just the other day I told some white teachers that I was very tired of their shenanigans, and as a parent I was becoming upset because they were not educating these black students. Well, of course, this shook them up. Later, some of the younger white teachers asked for examples of situations (you probably know more about this than I) pertaining to urban areas. It's difficult for me to say whether they did this because of a dedication; because they had been put down; because of a missionary zeal; or for some other reason. But the fact that they seemed willing to seek the assistance would have been enough for most black teachers to have wanted to help them. I'm not nearly as optimistic about the older white teachers.

Q: Can you give me a specific example of how black teachers may be able to assist white teachers?

R: Yes. I belong to a discussion group. One other member of the group is also black; two are white females; and the others are white males. On many occasions I've told the group that the discussions were of little value to me; and that I didn't have any hang-ups around white teachers per se at the moment that I needed to work out in the group. I also told my spouse that I was beginning to wonder about my giving two or three hours to help white teachers understand themselves and their racial prejudices. His rejoinder was, "Maybe you owe this to the 50 or 100 black students that each of them will come in contact with later." I told him this was exactly my reason for going along with the group so far.

WHITE PARENT:On White Teachers

Q: It's quite common to find a majority-white faculty in a predominantly black school. Does this create problems in the school?

R: I would say so. The purpose of the school is to educate, but respect is an essential ingredient to education. I'm of the opinion that white teachers don't respect the white students. If they don't respect the white students, it's very unlikely that they respect the black students. A lot of adults don't respect children – in addition to the fact that these children are black.

Q: Some white teachers were reared in a white community and attended a white college. In other words, they had had a limited amount of contact, if any, with blacks prior to being assigned to black schools. Does this create many problems for them?

R: This is a prejudiced society. A white person can't grow up in this society without being prejudiced against blacks. Some white people recognize their prejudice and try to rid themselves of it. However, a lot of white people make no bones about their prejudice: they think they're right.

Q: You're saying that white people can't grow up in this society without being prejudiced against black people. Does it affect the performance of white teachers? If so, how?

R: My guess is that it does. It has to affect the performance. And all white teachers are prejudiced against black students. Their expectations are not the same. They think black students aren't as capable. They think the black students are not the same. They look down on them. Some of them laugh at the students.

Q: It's most unusual for white teachers to admit openly that they have racial prejudices, yet you say it's impossible for white people to grow up in this society without being prejudiced. Are these teachers fooling themselves? Their students?

R: If they are prejudiced against black students, the students will know it. Prejudice need not be out in the open. The students will sense it. I think it's very tough to learn from people who put you down. And you're not going to want to learn. This kind of thing shows that the whole process of education is way off.

Q: You say the process of education is way off. Do you have reference to white teachers teaching in black schools?

R: I would think that's the first thing. That would be the most pervasive kind of thing gumming up education. I think there are white teachers who are plainly prejudiced, whose expectations of black students are lower, who don't like black students in a much more overt way, and who discipline them more harshly.

Q: What are your views concerning the racial climate in the country?

R: Let me begin with some generalities. We are fortunate in our community – which is middle class – to have a tremendous age range among the adults. The views concerning racial issues vary accordingly. I visit relatives in certain parts of the country, and the racial climate is discussed. Some black students attend the neighborhood school. Some of our friends tutor in black schools. So I would have to say that a remarkable amount of thought is being given to the racial climate. I would have to say that there is more contact between blacks and whites. However, I sense a change far beyond mere contact. More whites are working under the authority of blacks, which in my opinion is the crux of a lot of things. And whites who're working under blacks are sharing their experiences with others in the community. But more of this kind of thing must happen if middle-class whites are really going to change their attitudes. Here's something else. A certain group of us feel that the prep school leaves a great deal to be desired in terms of education, and we're going to educate our own children. The best thing to do is to place them in situations of maximum stress. Let them deal with the problems of integration, the riots, etc. If they can cope with the situation, and assuming that they get the basic skills, they should be allowed to remain, for if they can function under these conditions, they may grow up to be effective human beings.

Q: Educators often discuss various learning styles. Some of them say the learning style of black students differs from the learning style of white students. Do you agree?

R: Oh, boy! I would say the learning style of white students is more consecutive. They learn "A", then "B", then "C", etc. They like a certain kind of orderliness. The learning style of black students is more emotional. Let me try to describe what I mean by the term "emotional." I think I mean it would be helpful for the learning activity to be concrete. They seem to have to do it, go to it, and deal with it. Efforts should be made to avoid speaking of the activity remotely. I do think, however, that later they can extrapolate without returning to the activity each time. The matter of individually being in possession of the thing under discussion is helpful.

Q: You seem to feel that "concreteness" and "doing" are key elements in the life style of black students. Can they learn by developing mental pictures of the things to be learned, as well as by having the actual thing in front of them? To state the question another way, are you saying that some students can develop mental pictures and other students can't? If so, why?

R: I think it probably has something to do with the amount of verbal contact with other people; also, the ability to engage in reflective thought. I'm just surprised at the number of black children who deal entirely in terms of touch, and it's sure communication. Communication by touch is not ambiguous. Words always leave certain things unclear.

Q: White teachers in black schools have more limitations than black teachers in the

same schools. If you agree, what're some of the areas of limitation?

R: White teachers are more limited in areas such as background, experiences, and relatedness. However, the limitations can be overcome. One way is by getting to know the neighborhood better. Let me respond to the question on another level. I see three important elements: humaneness, blackness, and whiteness. One can relate, you know, as a human being, and this black-white thing isn't important. But in terms of the intellectual process, the thing that's supposed to take place in the school, I think there is a terrific advantage for the black teachers. White people aren't brought up in "blackness." So it has the intrigue of novelty for us; it's something we want to know. I have gotten a most scathing question from my black friends, not my white friends. This is it: How long does it take for the novelty to wear off? I don't know. .

Q: Recently, I conducted a workshop for teachers in urban schools. Twenty-one of the twenty-three participants were white. One of the white teachers said to me, "You seem to think that there are too many white teachers in black schools. But since you're stuck with us, at least presently, what can you suggest that may help us to do a better job in black schools?" Would you respond to her question?

R: Well, what you are doing now is important. Also, you're in a position to teach. Encounter sessions and things of this kind are great if handled properly. I have been in sessions where some people got hurt. People have so many defenses. When the defenses are knocked down and they get a glimpse of themselves, they pull the defenses up quickly. However, only the insensitive people do this. I think the encounters are excellent because efforts are made to deal with attitudes – which is most difficult. I have tried to change my brother's attitudes about this kind of thing for a long time, and I haven't been successful. Encounters are beneficial to people who're sensitive toward others; insensitive people are hopeless, really hopeless. And too many insensitive people are in the world today.

Q: Today, it's somewhat fashionable to discuss racial issues, at least privately. But isn't it too much to expect white teachers to reveal their racial feelings freely, even in a sensitivity session?

R: Being honest with another person is the most difficult thing to do in the world. Close friendships require some degree of honesty; but it's difficult to be completely honest with close friends, regardless of closeness, for it leaves one bare. However, I have two friends who call me when I begin lying to myself – and all of us lie and then get flashes of the truth. Flashes of the truth make me wonder about the things I've done. They make me wonder about my bad dreams. Seeing flashes of truth is supposed to be a continuing process, and education should help one to see them, particularly a college education. But I don't know. This is a difficult problem, and I've fought it all of my life. I'm different this year than two years ago and hope I'm different two years from now.

Q: How do you view yourself racially? Are you the exception?

R: That may be true. We have several [black] friends. Most of the time one picks friends who have the same views of things. We just spent a weekend with a family whom we did not know before. During the weekend "bells" rang, and they didn't

sound comfortable. The family was very bigoted. I know we have our hang-ups, too. We have our prejudices. But I really don't see this kind of thing.

Q: Not long ago a white person said it was psychologically essential for white people to feel superior to somebody, and the somebody was black people. Do white people have to feel superior to somebody?

R: Let me use you as an example. You are educated; you have a particular talent; you are a useful member of the community. Therefore, you don't have to fear anybody, no matter who or what he is. But if you were a member of the working class (I come from a working-class background), anybody could do your job. So you would need some kind of protection, such as a union or community or ethnic group, because you would be just one in 10,000. Anybody could take your job and do it as well as you – black man or any other man. So you would be forced to say that he is lazy; he's no good; he cheats; he lies, etc. And you would state these as reasons for keeping him out. This is what I heard as a child. Okay?

Q: How would you assist white teachers in their efforts to see themselves racially?

R: Again, you have to forget the older white teachers. Just let them die off and replace them. The younger teachers need to become more aware of their prejudices. They need more confidence that they can function effectively in the black schools. They need to increase their knowledge concerning black people. These kinds of things should be a part of their training at the university.

Q: Do white teachers know themselves racially?

R: The younger white teachers are attempting to know themselves, but not the older ones. They don't even realize that their attitude is what we would call racist – or what you would call racist. And if one attempts to point this out to them they would attempt to refute it. You know, I don't think there's much hope for the old-timers who have been teaching and already have their attitudes set. Many white teachers have never known a black person personally. Their children have not played with black children. They've never been in truly integrated situations. Therefore, it's very difficult for them to know themselves racially.

Q: Mention is frequently made of the democratic process. Do you think black Americans see the democratic process as being viable?

R: I don't know the answer to that question. My guess is that enough of them see the process as being viable, otherwise, the country would be in a lot more trouble. But maybe it's not fair to make this kind of statement based solely on the fact that we're not in the midst of a black-white revolution. Perhaps black people are not fighting because they think they can't win a revolution. Perhaps they are not organized or something else.

Q: Assume for the moment that you're superintendent of schools in the city, and one of the black schools has a majority-white faculty. What would you do, if anything?

R: I would recruit black teachers – I think. See, I know this is a complicated question. I would have to be very careful and tactful, go through channels, and do

everything to smooth ruffled feathers. On the other hand, if I'm really interested in educating black children, there is only one thing to do. That is, recruit black teachers!

Q: Specifically, why is the recruitment of black teachers so important?

R: Excuse me, but I must mention something. We have used black baby-sitters. A couple of them, two sisters, were college material. We really tried to persuade the older sister to go to college. But she graduated from high school and got a job. The younger sister was more apt, had fewer problems, and would have become an excellent teacher. Well, we tried equally hard to persuade her to go to college. She didn't go. The reason she didn't go was that society had convinced her that she wouldn't have made it. In a sense, she had been convinced by the white teachers that she wouldn't have made it. There were no black teachers in the school. One day she even told us that she wasn't college material. But we knew that she was. So we discussed college, grades, etc. We mentioned some of the bright, white students in her class and asked her whether she was as apt as they. She said she was just as apt. Furthermore, her grades were good enough. But she wouldn't go to college. There is another reason for having black teachers in black schools. These people serve as models for black students. They have graduated from college and are now teaching. They serve as living proof to black students, and this is worthwhile. This is proof to the students that the black teachers made it and, therefore, they can make it.

Q: Are white teachers psychologically ready to accept black leadership, for example, a black principal?

R: If they aren't ready psychologically, that's very sad. I think it's a very sad story. The time has come not to wait any longer, and that's all there is to it. If they can't accept black leadership that's tough. I certainly don't think we need to wait until all of them are ready. This wouldn't make sense.

Q: In your judgment, how do black students perceive white teachers?

R: Students know who likes them and who doesn't. They know who thinks well of them and who doesn't. Sometimes it's a very subtle thing, but they pick it up quickly. When I was in school I learned from teachers whom I respected, as well as from some teachers whom I didn't respect. But students have to be assured that they're getting a fair deal. They don't have to like the teacher, but they have to feel that the teacher is going to treat them fairly. Obviously, this can be overdone. I have a black friend, for example, who seems put down at times as a result of an incident that has nothing to do with black-white relationships. But I think the friend, a professional, responds as if the situation were racial.

Q: Some white parents tutor black students voluntarily. Why?

R: They have very little daily exposure with that environment. So they tutor black students because they want exposure. The exposure between the races is a long, hard kind of thing with a lot of troubling back and forth. However, it's very much worthwhile, and reading a book is not a substitute. I think it just has to be lived.

Q: Some people say there are far more pressures on teachers in white schools than

black schools. One reason given is that white parents demand much more from teachers than black parents. Are black parents equally as demanding?

R: Yes. If you had asked that question two or three years ago, I would've answered negatively. It's not easy to remove a poor teacher from a white school. It's not easy to remove a poor teacher from a black school, regardless of whether the teacher is white, black, or something else. I am familiar with a situation where the black community said it didn't want a white principal, claiming that he was poor, inadequate, etc. He was removed, probably for damn good reasons. This person was incompetent. Let me put it this way. Whether or not a teacher is removed from a school has nothing to do with color; rather, it depends on the education of the local board of education. And I think the local board of education has to be educated.

Q: Do you think white teachers can relate to black students and black parents as effectively as black teachers?

R: Black teachers can relate better initially. However, if after the initial meeting white teachers show that they're interested in the education of black students, color would make very little difference. They can show this interest by taking the initiative and going to parents in an effort to convince them that the teachers are willing to work very cooperatively with parents for the benefit of the students. The teachers can't merely sit in the school, particularly when many of the mothers work and many of the fathers aren't home. On the other hand, I don't think the teachers must always come from behind their desks. I think they have to be available. They have to show that they care.

Q: What's your perception of white teachers' perception of black students?

R: Well, I think white teachers would probably think black students come from homes that are not as tuned-in. One wouldn't find the books in the homes and the backgrounds that would be found elsewhere. I've heard white teachers talk about how they work with black students for eight hours, and the students return home; however, the home is unable to provide support. I think this is a problem for white teachers. And some of them ask: Why bother? They say some of the students are unruly. They say efforts are often made to involve the parents, but some of the parents are working; others live too far from the school; and others simply don't care. So the problems are thrown back into the teachers' laps.

Q: In view of the racial situation, do you suppose white teachers are encountering special problems in black schools?

R: Sensitive teachers will have problems, but they can still tune in, or be open, to the community and the people. Not long ago a black principal was assigned to a white school in this community. She, too, had some problems in that she had come from a black school to a white school, but she was a sensitive, tuned-in person. She could see and feel beyond color. Unfortunately, I think there are very few black principals in this world. Yes, there are very few. Some white teachers are not sensitive in dealing with the white students. But I imagine the problems they encounter in the black community are doubled.

Q: Your reference to the black principal is very interesting. In my judgment, she may be the most outstanding principal in the entire city. Are white teachers in black schools as sensitive to the needs of people as she?

R: No. Unfortunately, a group of teachers are being prepared who are not tuned in. And this is one of my hang-ups.

Q: How do black people perceive white people?

R: Well, we talk too fast. We're nervous and worried about a lot of silly things. We can really be taken to the cleaners if somebody really wants to. Obviously, this isn't true of all whites; some can see through the rigmarole. But it's how I think blacks perceive us. Now, I think the white mind is remarkably rigid, despite its very intellectual, quick, and very verbal abilities. It functions very precisely. In terms of being exposed to really alien types of ideas, it responds not by slowing down and confronting; rather, by turning back as if going around in a circle.

Q: Are white people afraid to walk through black sections of the city?

R: I would say yes. Maybe. I don't know. That may be true. Maybe they would say so. All I know is that I would not. But I wouldn't walk through white sections of the city by myself, and I'm not particularly a scared person. As far as I'm concerned, it is due to city living. However, one can look at it from a psychological point of view. White people have taken advantage of and harmed black people for centuries. And I don't think you can harm other people for all those years and not somewhere in your being have the feeling that they may try to get back at you someday. So there would have to be guilty feelings on the part of white people. And that's psychological. Perhaps some of the white people go into teaching in black schools because they don't want to feel guilty anymore. They want to make up for what they've done. Obviously, these things aren't global. That is, some people feel this way; others do not. Any person walking alone at night can't forget reality. I think the kind of fear white people have when alone in the black community, or even when riding in a car – and I have experienced this myself – is unreasonable, however.

Q: What kinds of experiences do you suppose white teachers have in black schools?

R: My sister is a teacher, and she fled the black schools. She thought she was very radical and liberal but just couldn't function in the school. She also taught in a predominantly white school. She said the black students were hopeless. They weren't interested in learning. Instead, they were interested in sex, cars, and that kind of thing. She told me the black students tried to get her to touch them – like, lay hands on them. They would touch her hand and say, for example, that her fingernail polish was pretty, or that she had on a nice dress. But she felt that they were daring her to touch them. She felt that they didn't want her to touch them. Anyway, she was afraid of what might have happened to her if she had touched them. She was afraid that she would've gotten hurt. She thought they were insolent – okay.

BLACK PARENT: On White Teachers

Q: How well do parents in this community accept the fact that most of the teachers are white?

R: They would like to see more black teachers, but not just for the sake of having black teachers. You know what they really want? The parents want black teachers from the South. Black teachers from the South would really teach the students, because they know it was "tooth and nail" getting their own education. It's possible that blacks in the North haven't had too much contact with other blacks. If so, they're really white, except for color. Anyway, more demands are being made by blacks for black teachers. Black teachers move here from other states, but many of them are not hired. The explanation given is that many of them are unable to pass the examination given by the local board of education. Well, some white teachers are working who have not passed the same examination. It has been said that the whites are still working on some kind of degree. If whites still working on some degree are allowed to teach, why can't blacks who have had teaching experience be allowed to teach, although they have not passed an examination? This suggests that efforts are being made to keep blacks out primarily. It's just a matter of race as far as I'm concerned. Black teachers in general aren't getting too many jobs. And if a black teacher is too productive in a black school, the teacher is transferred to a white school.

Q: Why do white teachers teach in black schools?

R: Sometimes they have no choice. If the only available positions are in black schools, they have to take it or leave it. There are times when people are delighted to take any job. A few white teachers are dedicated. I think they accept their assignments almost with a kind of missionary zeal. They think they can conquer the world. I'm not condemning them for this attitude because they put themselves into the situation wholeheartedly in an effort to be effective. Obviously, they are among the more effective white teachers. Other white teachers teach in black schools because they are just lazy. They think they won't have to push themselves, and their supervisors will not say they're ineffective.

Q: How do black parents perceive white teachers?

R: The perceptions vary among parents. Some feel that the white teachers try to do a good job. Others feel that white teachers really aren't interested in their children; rather, the teachers are trying to get by, doing as little work as possible, and just

waiting for the time when they can move on to a better school. They think of a "better" school as a school with fewer students in a classroom in a more advantaged area.

Q: Some teachers find it necessary to discipline students from time to time. Generally speaking, how do parents feel about their children being disciplined by white teachers?

R: I've heard some parents say that they are willing to accept not only white teachers but teachers in general under the conditions that the teachers will not lay a hand on their children, or something to that effect. If there are disciplinary problems, the parents want to be notified. But they don't want their children disciplined physically by any teacher! Now this may have come about as a result of some abuses by white teachers. I really don't know all of the details. I have heard some of the parents say that they don't mind their children being kept after school, but they strongly disapprove of them being slapped around or beaten in any way. I think the parents feel that sometimes some subtle name-calling is going on. Further, the children are just being made to feel that they're less than human.

Q: Do black students have a different learning style than white children?

R: I think black students learn by demonstrations. White students learn in a similar manner, but they also depend upon the interpretation of the written word. Blacks seem to have more manual interpretation, more manual dexterity. Blacks seem to be able to use their hands and do a lot of very intricate things – that is, they make things. Whites seem to be able to read the printed page, think about it, etc. But they don't seem as apt in making things. Whites are very abstract. Blacks are very concrete so far as learning is concerned.

Q: Obviously, some white teachers in black schools are ineffective and apathetic, yet they are allowed to remain in the schools. Do you think ineffective and apathetic black teachers would be allowed to remain in white schools?

R: I know very little about the tenure laws. I don't know whether the teacher who has managed to remain in a school for three or four years is safe forever and can sit down and do nothing, or whether it's a matter of the principal and supervisor not supervising the teacher after the three or four years. I'm just not familiar with the tenure laws in this area. On the other hand, if a black teacher was in a white school and not producing, the teacher would be transferred someplace – regardless of whether the teacher is tenured. I don't know where the teacher would be transferred, but he would be transferred. I think PTA groups are much more active in the white community. Parents are much more aware of what's going on in the schools. Black parents realize that education is the key out of poverty. Yet I wonder how many of them actually have the time to spare. And even if a few become involved, their voices are lost in the shuffle.

Q: Why don't black parents visit the school periodically and inquire concerning the progress of their children instead of waiting for an invitation?

R: There may be several reasons, possibly based upon bad experiences parents have

had during PTA meetings or open house at the school. They also may feel that teachers are not interested in their children, that whatever they say will fall on deaf ears. Sometimes people alienate one another by their approach initially, and the person alienated is turned off immediately. For example, if a parent approaches a teacher in a hostile manner, the teacher will feel threatened. Consequently, I don't think the teacher would be open to any kind of criticism. Furthermore, I don't think the teacher would try to be of much assistance to the parent. Instead, the teacher would be caught up in trying to prove that he is a worthy teacher.

Q: Should most of the teachers in black schools be black?

R: Yes. However, it would be unrealistic not to have some white teachers in black schools. Black students experience certain hostilities and negative views as a result of having white teachers. And in a sense this provides an excellent opportunity for growth for them. It enables them to better understand the kinds of difficulties they will certainly encounter with white people in general after they leave school.

Q: What percentage of the teachers in black schools should be black?

R: In some respects, I'd like to see all black teachers. I think white teachers have certain limitations: they can go only as far as their hearts will allow them. One of their limitations is that they think black people don't love their children. Now, I think black children get more love and affection than children of any other race, including the tribes. They're deeply loved. Their parents can push them, and this is often seen as affection. Their parents may say, "Go on, boy or girl," and this also may be seen as affection. But white people can't do or say these kinds of things and get the same results. White teachers must be able to care for the emotional needs of black students. In order to do this, however, they must first admit that we love our children, that our children are human, that our children are subject to error. As far as most white people are concerned, blacks are either perfect or stupid! There is no middle ground. They won't allow a middle ground. If you have observed them grouping students in a classroom, you know that students with low grades are in one group. They are the students to whom the teachers usually say no. I think their grades are low because the teachers have not taken the time to teach them. I think they concluded after meeting them the first time: "Well, what's the use of wasting my time on these students. They're not going to learn." You will find in the other group students who know how to con the teacher by smiling and being nice. They are always clean and easy to be near. The teachers are willing to work with them. They will say to these students, "No, that's not the correct answer. Let's go over it again. You did not understand it." Students in this group fit an image which the teacher expects, so they work with them. If they spent the same amount of time with students in the other group, the students would do just as well. White teachers do a lot of this by sight. Some of it is based on skin color [meaning various shades of blackness]. I also think the well-dressed student is more likely to get a better education than the average-dressed student – in some instances and with some teachers. When I find this kind of thing among white teachers, I always try to make them aware of it. Some of them are simply unaware of it. The other day a teacher told me that he was going to fail a student because the student was making no attempt to learn. I asked if he was making an

attempt to teach the student. And the teacher said, "I can't stand him. I couldn't stand him after the first day." The teacher had forgotten what happened the first day! Incidentally, it was a clean student, and he had said or done something. Anyway, the thing had bothered the teacher, so he made up his mind not to try. White teachers are not aware of a lot of things, and they are honestly unaware of them. And this makes the situation difficult. It's difficult to tell wrong people just what they're doing wrong, because it takes a while for them to admit that they are wrong. You don't like to say: "You're doing it." Sometimes it's better to say: "Some people are doing it."

Q: Many white teachers say black parents aren't interested in the education of their children. Parents don't care about the education of their children. Do they care?

R: They care. They just don't know how or where to go to get certain things accomplished. Parents have called me and said they disagreed with something teachers did or said to their children, or with grades on school work. When they ask about the situation, the teachers say, "Oh, don't let that bother you. It's all right." But when report cards are issued the students have failing grades in the particular subjects. Then parents ask themselves: What can we do? I've spoken to some of the teachers about the "gray matter" thing. They always say, "Some people have it and some people don't." I asked one teacher: You mean to tell me if one person lives two blocks east and another lives two blocks west, the one who lives two blocks east has more sense than the one two blocks west? I tried to make her come right out and say that I knew what she was talking about. As far as I was concerned, the teacher implied that whites have more sense than blacks. Some of them really are hung up on this.

Q: You said parents care, but they just don't know how and where to go in order to get certain things accomplished. How can they be helped to acquire this knowledge?

R: One way would be to hold various meetings for parents. But they are tired of going to the kind of meeting where people talk to them without giving parents the opportunity to express themselves. If there is a PTA meeting or any other kind of meeting and the parents don't have a chance to mention the things of concern to them, they stop attending. Recently, two rather successful meetings were held for parents, and the weather was bad. It was raining and sleeting; but they came anyway. I'm anxious to see the attendance at the next meeting. The parents have already been told that people will not talk with them in these meetings, that if they can't contribute there is no point in having the meetings. More parents would probably attend the meetings if they were held in the social center here in the community, but when there is a need to discuss something with the teachers, it would be better to hold the meeting at the school. Teachers would come to the social center, but some of the parents don't like the idea. It's very odd; but the parents don't particularly want to invite the teachers to the social center, although the teachers have agreed to come. I suppose home visitations never occurred to the teachers. If they would visit homes, they would get a different insight. I hear a lot of talk concerning conducting workshops for white teachers so that they can better understand black people, but they are not going to understand black people by attending workshops. You see, they don't live in the community. If they could have time for visting homes, they would learn a lot. It would be necessary for them to call the parents ahead of time. And knowing my people as I do, one would offer them lunch, another supper, etc. But this

would give them an opportunity to see the children as they really are. This would give the teachers an excellent insight. I have personally invited teachers to my home – to even bring their spouses. So far none of them have accepted.

Q: Why haven't the white teachers accepted your invitation?

R: They think their visits would be an invasion of privacy, based on things some parents have said to them. Some parents have told them they better not come to their doors. Yet I know some parents who have invited teachers to their homes, and the teachers have accepted.

Q: Are white teachers willing to be honest, sincere, and open, concerning their racial feelings, particularly in a racially-mixed group?

R: No, I don't think so. But I don't think anybody is too willing to do this, especially if they're trying to hide something. Nevertheless, I think teachers ought to let students see both sides of them – the "peachy" side and the "non-peachy" side – within limits, of course. They have to maintain a certain distance in the relationship with students, but the free and honest atmosphere is so essential. Black students also like to discuss things of a casual nature – for instance, entertainment, that're very popular among blacks. White teachers feel much less comfortable discussing these things than black teachers.

Q: Black parents are much more inclined to accept white teachers in black schools than white parents to accept black teachers in white schools? If you agree, why?

R: It's because of the racism among white people as far as blacks are concerned. Blacks always have to excel and perform in a super manner in order to be accepted by any whites in any category, not only in education. If whites can avoid encountering black teachers, black bosses, or black anything else, they would. On the other hand, a lot of blacks have really been conditioned to accept white teachers who are very mediocre, simply because they are white.

Q: Some people say the country is becoming polarized. That is, blacks are moving in one direction and whites are moving in another direction. Do you share this thinking?

R: Based on all the talk concerning black awareness and black-is-beautiful, there is a definite separation. Ten or fifteen years ago the educated Negro was not too conscious of his blackness. He wanted to find a career, a vocation, and succeed. But it was success in the white world. He was not too concerned about the reactions in the community. He wanted the personal satisfaction of having done a job well. He wanted the salary commensurate with his ability and position. Today, everyone is thinking of his blackness, rather than just getting a job. Blacks want jobs, but they also want to feel that the jobs will in some way help the black community. So there's definitely a separation, a polarization. Of course, black is beautiful. But as someone said to me the other day, blacks will probably remain in the minority in this country forever. And there is no doubt that we need pride in our blackness. However, we also need to learn to live in that white world. There can be the kind of separation to the point of saying that some states are going to be set aside for blacks, but I don't think this will come during my life. So we need to become more aware of our heritage and learn to live in

the white world simultaneously. White teachers may be capable of preparing black students to live in the white world, but I don't think they have the necessary background to teach black students to be proud of their heritage. Except for Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver, white teachers are not aware of our heroes. And in my own mind, this is one of the reasons why the revolt of Nat Turner was a success. All of a sudden there was a statement that the Negroes had not been happy, smiling children in slavery; that there had been attempts to free them; that they had realized they were being imposed on. So I think part of the success of that book (*The Confessions of Nat Turner*) was its educational value in teaching white people that there was more to blacks than they had considered. There are some black students who would not do their best in school if they resented white teachers. They would not cooperate fully; and if the teachers and students are not interacting, environment is not conducive to learning. A person may be the most learned in the world, yet he must have the ability to convey some of the knowledge in terms that the people can understand and accept. If there is resentment almost to the point of rebellion, he is not going to get anyplace.

Q: What are some of your criticisms of the black home?

R: I think the greatest criticism of the black home is that the children are allowed to go to school with the attitude that nobody is going to tell them anything, that they do not have to obey anybody, that they can do whatever they want to do. This kind of attitude is also found among some parents. Apparently, some parents tell their children to do as the parents say, that they will take care of them, etc. But parent's can't always take care of their children, simply because the parents aren't in the school. This creates a problem for teachers, because some students will say, "I don't have to do it. Go ahead and tell my parents." It's a problem, because teachers aren't always able to distinguish between students who're lying and those who're not. If a student said to me, "Go ahead and tell my parents," I would certainly reassure the student of my intentions. Often the student who makes this kind of statement is lying. And if the teacher tells his mother, the student is in trouble. Yet the teacher often accepts the statement, because it's easier to accept the statement than challenge the student in order to determine whether the statment is true. So I'm saying that teachers are very much at fault. They won't challenge the students, they won't talk to parents, etc. They can say, "I would've taught the student, but he was disruptive." Then I ask: What's a disruptive?

Q: Black parents have often been accused of having misplaced values. Some white people say, for example, that they'd rather spend $5 for a bottle of wine for themselves than for a gym suit for one of their children. Are parents in this community willing to pay for gym suits, field trips, lunches, or whatever their children need for school?

R: Yes, except for gym things. You see, there's a difference between black parents and white parents. Black parents know that their children spend the entire summer playing on sidewalks, in streets, etc., without gym suits; and feel that if their children can play outdoors without a gym suit, they can play in the gym without gym suits. They simply don't attach as much importance to a gym suit as white parents. And white people just don't understand this kind of thing. White people like uniforms –

any type of uniform. They just have to have some kind of a badge. A black person may be just as satisfied playing in his Sunday clothes! So it would be just as important to a black parent to have a bottle of wine in order to relax as for the child to have a gym suit. Furthermore, the gym suit may cost, say, $5.98. Well, a dress may also cost $5.98. Since most of them have a limited amount of cash, they would rather buy a dress, which the child can wear every day, than a gym suit, which will only be used in gym. They just don't see the need for a gym suit. Now the field trip is a different matter. Black parents know that they will seldom have the opportunity to take their children on a field trip. They see the field trip as being more important than the bottle of wine. It is a good opportunity for their children. Let me mention something else about gym. Many black parents don't see why it should be included in the school day. They can't see how it contributes to learning. Children can play anywhere. So a lot of importance is not attached to gym.

Q: How do black students perceive white teachers?

R: Some of them, particularly the teen-agers, are convinced that white teachers are unnecessary, that they're baby-sitting, not teaching; that they are required to be in the school from 8:30 to 3:30. And as far as some of the teachers are concerned, their job is to keep the students in the classroom and quiet, and not allow them to race through the halls. Otherwise, the principal will come and check on the teachers. The students feel that the teachers, generally speaking, are making very little effort to teach anything.

Q: Do white teachers have certain disadvantages in black schools?

R: Yes, primarily because they are narrow-minded. They can't see beyond *the child*. To them a child is a person who has been taken to museums and operas, introduced to magazines, and has travelled from the time the child was born. This includes the black child. White teachers see these things as being common among white children. But they seem not to be able to visualize a poor child who has never had the advantages of going places and doing things. This lack of knowledge would hinder any person, especially white. I'd say white teachers have not had an opportunity to observe even poor white children. Anyway, whatever black children do is shocking to them because they have never had any experiences with black children. Basically, people have a black/white orientation.

Q: How do white teachers perceive black parents? How do they perceive blacks in general? Let's be even more general: How do white Americans perceive black Americans?

R: It's a shame to say this, but they see us as shifty, dark, ignorant, nappy-haired, unattractive, smelly, and dirty. They see us as being hostile. That is, we would cut a throat in a minute. They think we always fight among ourselves. White people see all of the bad things in black people. They don't know what they're talking about, and this may affect their ability to relate. There are white teachers who think black parents don't know what they are talking about. I think each person is going to have to attempt to view the other person for himself.

Q: Can you distinguish between approaches taken by white teachers and black

teachers in carrying out their teaching responsibilities?

R: People work from their experiences. Therefore, it's very difficult for white teachers not to be influenced by their own values and upbringings. So I think they try to expose black students to field trips, for example, in many, many of the cultural areas which the students might not get at home. That's not exactly what I mean. I mean the white teachers tend to involve black students with what they do. They expose the students to the general things in the city – which are white in structure. In other words, white teachers expose black students to everything that is culturally white. Black teachers tend to go in the other direction. They tend to expose the students to everything that is culturally black.

Q: Can you give me examples of things that are culturally black?

R: Yes. There are shops in this community featuring aspects of the African culture. There are numerous books, poems, short stories, essays, etc., written by blacks pertaining to the black culture.

Q: Achievement in black schools in the city is lower than achievement in white schools. Since a majority of the teachers in black schools are white, to what extent are they responsible for the lower achievement?

R: Well, I think a lot of the problem has to do with the expectations of white teachers. This can always be a self-fulfilling prophecy. When teachers expect and demand a lot of students, students tend to try to work up to this level. But when expectations are low, students tend to perform at this level. Furthermore, many of the white teachers don't demand as much from themselves as they would in a predominantly white school. Of course, there are some exceptions, because I do know of white teachers who're always trying to think of new methods of teaching and making the class interesting. But most of them seem to feel that they can get by with doing less work because they're dealing with black students. They feel that they are in a culturally deprived area, and the parents aren't going to come to school and complain. Black parents usually visit the school only when asked to do so because of a behavioral problem. White parents will visit the school when there is a behavioral problem, but they will also visit the school when their children aren't learning.

Q: What advice would you give to white teachers who are considering an assignment in a black school?

R: I would advise them not to automatically assume that black students are inferior. They really must overcome this kind of thing. They also will have to give more consideration to various aspects of the students' environment. If a student's parents are poor, and the family is existing only because both parents are working, the student may not have the enrichment and the background of the white students. Open-mindedness is also very important. White teachers being assigned to black schools ought not be afraid. They ought not expect students to do things of a violent nature.

Q: White teachers are afraid to return to this community for PTA meetings and other meetings because they think they'd be attacked, their automobile tires would be slashed, etc. Is it true that these kinds of things would happen?

R: No, it's not true. They can come to this community, even walk the streets, and nobody would bother them. I don't think they have ever questioned this. They just simply don't do it. And I've often wondered why. I do think there is a misunderstanding between the administration and the teachers as to whether they should come into this type of community, whether they have the right.

Q: What're some of the reasons why black parents aren't more active in school activities?

R: They are suffering under the impression that everyone in the school has more intelligence than they. But from the standpoint of life experiences, they are more intelligent than the teachers – at least some of the teachers. They've got a better understanding of children; they've got a much better understanding of the conditions in the community.

Q: The faculties in black schools in the city are predominantly white. Most of the paraprofessionals are black. How would you react if a program was established in order to prepare paraprofessionals for full teaching duties?

R: I see no problems with that idea, if they would be well prepared, equipped, and motivated to teach the students and help them learn. On the other hand, I don't think everybody with a degree is automatically better prepared than everybody without a degree. I know a number of educated fools!

Q: Are efforts made to assign the above-average white teachers to black schools?

R: I seriously doubt it. I am not really familiar with the faculty. But I seriously doubt that the "pride and joy" among white teachers are assigned to black schools. I think the teachers have a lot to do with their assignments, at least initially. And it's possible that white teachers do not want to be assigned to black schools. If they are assigned to all-white schools at the outset and get some satisfaction from the predominantly white population, then some of them may want to be transferred to black schools. Others will not; and they will say they don't want to be transferred because of things such as purse-snatching and damages to their automobiles. Frankly, I think these kinds of things are magnified and used as excuses, particularly by white female teachers, in order not to be transferred. If the assignments were left entirely to the local board of education, the board would operate just as other boards in the city. The better facilities and other things would go to the so-called better neighborhoods, not the black areas.

Q: What can be done, if anything, to help white teachers become more effective in black schools?

R: Perhaps more black paraprofessionals should be placed in black schools. The PTA should be strengthened. I think more programs should be implemented for parents which would enable them to better understand that ultimately they are responsible for the education of their children; and if they allow the neighborhood school to provide an inferior education their children will be seriously handicapped.

Q: Should teachers be expected to contribute to the total growth and development of

students? That is, should their teaching responsibilities extend beyond those of an academic nature?

R: Yes. But too often white teachers see teaching in our schools as merely a job to be done from 8:30 to 3:30; and that's the end of it. Black teachers probably live in the community. They may even be the neighbor or the family friend of some of the students. Consequently, they try harder and do more extracurricular things to help the students develop to their fullest potential. So more qualified black teachers are needed in black schools, and the local school board must recruit them. Of course, I don't want a black teacher just because he is black; rather, because he knows his subject matter. In the meantime, very little can be done about the situation.

Q: What general criticisms would you make concerning white teachers in black schools?

R: Some white teachers probably try to get their lessons across. But I think they must do more than get lessons across. They must be willing to give more love and affection. If students approach a teacher and the teacher keeps them at arm's length, problems may be created as a result. I've often found that this arm's-length behavior by teachers causes a kind of "jerky" attitude by students. Later, if a teacher attempts to touch a student, for example, the student will usually jerk his shoulders. This suggests a "don't-touch-me" attitude. If the teacher tells a student to take a seat, the student will usually jerk; as if to say, "Don't you put your hands on me." Then the teacher labels the student as a bad student. It's possible that he created the problem by keeping the students at arm's length.

PAPERS BY EXPERTS

THE WHITE TEACHER IN THE ALL-BLACK SCHOOL: SOME COMMENTS ON THE LINCOLN PROJECT

By

L. Wendell Rivers**

The Problem:

A number of very important educational and interpersonal issues are inherent in the questions and responses which constitute the project conducted by Dr. Eugene Lincoln (1973). The purpose of the discussion which follows is to identify and explore these issues from the standpoint of the problems which emerge from the presence of white teachers in predominantly-black elementary and secondary schools.

Very little specific research effort has been devoted to an analysis of those factors which are related to the ability of the teacher who is white to cope with the difficulties engendered by the factors of color and socioeconomic background. Our* experiences in conducting interracial teacher workshops seem to indicate that one of the major problems faced by the white teacher in the black school is that of encountering a culture with which he or she has had only indirect contact. An analysis of the content of the Lincoln report shows that the major concerns expressed by white and black teachers and by white and black parents, are concerns based upon a very limited understanding of the experiences *and* motivations of the white teachers.

It has become common knowledge that much of public education throughout the country is in the hands of teachers and administrators who come from various levels of the middle-class segment of our society. It is from this fact, alone, that a major portion of the problems inherent in the process of education for our so-called socially disadvantaged populations develop. It is obvious that differences between the cultural or subcultural experiences of the educator and those of the student have served to produce major interpersonal conflicts in the areas of values, attitudes, and perceptions between teacher and pupil. However, it must be pointed out that these types of interpersonal conflicts are not solely confined to the relationships between white teachers and black students. Black, middle-class teachers are also confronted with the need to resolve many of the same personal and perceptual problems which result from social background differences between themselves and their students.

We will, however, take the position in this paper, that black teachers, as a group, are more likely than white teachers to come from backgrounds similar to those of the black students whom they teach and, thus, have the opportunity to be more realistic in their expectations; more specifically, those expectations which relate to the social behaviors of their students. It is with this fact in mind that I will confine my remarks from this point on to the situation underscored in the Lincoln report: that of the middle-class white teacher who has chosen or has been assigned to teach in a predominantly black, or all-black elementary or secondary school.

*Project Follow-Thru, St. Louis Public School System.

**Dr. Rivers, a psychologist, is director of the Mental Health Specialists Program, University of Missouri-St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri.

The Issues:

It is possible to identify at least nine basic issues, or interpersonal problem areas which emerged from the question and answer exchange of the Lincoln report. The order in which I have listed them below bears little relationship to the severity of their impact upon the white teacher-black student teaching and learning situation. It is felt that they are all of critical importance for our understanding of better ways to arrange and administer interracial educational settings of the type dealt with in the work reported by Lincoln. The issues are:

1. Why do white teachers accept or choose teaching assignments in black schools? What are some of the salient personal characteristics of these teachers?
2. How do black students perceive white teachers?
3. Do black teachers expect more from black students than do white teachers?
4. Is the attitude of the white teacher in a black school one of tolerance rather than one of acceptance of black students?
5. How do white teachers perceive black parents?
6. Is the authoritarian teaching approach superior to the permissive approach for the white teacher assigned to a black school?
7. Does the learning style of the black child differ from that of the white child?
8. Is it necessary for white teachers to be open about their racial feelings toward black students?
9. Who is the effective white teacher in the black school?

The reader will recognize that the answer to question nine will depend greatly upon the answers found for the first eight. It is the opinion of the present writer that much more research and study needs to be done in reference to each of these questions. Only in the case of question seven has any major contemporary research effort been undertaken. The results of that research will be discussed in a later section of this paper. Presently, however, let us turn our attention to a brief discussion of each of the issues within the context of the responses presented in the Lincoln report.

"Why do white teachers accept assignments in black schools, and what are some of the factors which characterize these individuals?"

Gottlieb (1964) studied the background characteristics of black and white teachers from six public elementary schools in a medium-sized, industrial community in the Midwest. The purpose of his study was to identify differences and similarities in how black and white elementary school teachers view their work. Fifty-three of the teachers were white and thirty-six were black. He found that the proportion of males to females was the same for both racial groups. However, it was determined that black teachers, on the average, were younger (47 percent were less than 35) when compared to the white teachers (less than 30 percent were under 35 years of age). The black teachers were more likely to be married and were more likely to have grown up in large communities. In addition, the black teachers, as a group, obtained their degrees from public urban universities, and more than one-fourth were raised in families where a woman was the head of the household, as compared to only 4 percent of the white teachers who possessed these background characteristics.

There is some evidence that indicates that during the mid- and late 1960s, younger white female teachers were seeking and finding teaching assignments in the black ghettos of the East and Midwest. However, the remaining differences mentioned above appear to have remained constant. The Civil Rights Movement of the late 1960s could be viewed as responsible for bringing younger, Eastern, liberal-minded, white college graduates into the teaching profession with the intent of participating by working in black community schools.

A reflection of this type of motivation on the part of young white teachers is alluded to by the white teacher respondent in the Lincoln report who suggested that:

> More than 50 percent of the white teachers in black schools are not there because they want to teach there.

The implication is that the remaining 50 percent feel they have something to offer black youngsters and may be classified as the "missionary type." The inducement seems to be that these young people feel they are answering a call for idealism, dedication to a cause, the desire to render service and to help the "have nots."

Another point of view was expressed by a black teacher in the Lincoln report: "I think most of them would refuse to teach in black schools if they could afford to do so financially."

A third point of view is that white teachers experience less pressure from students and administrators. They feel they do not have to perform at a high level of efficiency and quality; therefore, they seek out these "easy" assignments.

Regardless of which of the above views one may favor, the fact remains that there is not enough empirical data to recommend any of them.

The question of teacher motivation becomes one of critical importance when a white teacher is considered for placement in the black community. As Betty Levy (1965) points out:

> Working in a Negro slum school is in many ways like going into a foreign country [for the white teacher].*

Much research is needed to determine the most efficient and effective means by which teacher motivation may be assessed *before* assignments are made to ghetto schools. It is the opinion of the writer that this is *one* of the most important factors for the determination of the possible success of a white teacher with black youngsters.

"How do black students perceive white teachers?"

This is probably the most important question of all. Yet, there is a definite lack of research data which would give us sufficient insight into this vital aspect of the teacher-student relationship.

"Do black teachers expect more from black students than do white teachers?"

One of the white teachers, in response to this question, pointed out that, in her

* Brackets mine.

opinion, black teachers in fact *do* expect more from black students than do white teachers. The rationale given was based upon the idea that black teachers have a vested interest in the education of black students and that black teachers are aware of the limited opportunities for academic experiences in the homes of black students. According to this respondent, white teachers are not aware of these limitations and, thus, base their expectations upon popular stereotypes concerning black people.

This view, although popular, is much too simplistic. The evidence seems to indicate that white teachers are very much aware of the limited academic experiences of black children in the home. What does differ, however, are the reasons given by white and black teachers. An example is the following excerpt from a paper written by a white urban teacher (Levy, 1965) speaking of her class of nine- and ten-year-olds:

> Many teen-age blacks are sure that white teachers are not committed to teaching them. They express the feeling that their white teachers are mainly concerned with keeping them quiet and disciplined. In most cases the teacher is perceived as being somewhat fearful of close contact with the students. A great deal of resentment is expressed in regard to her presence in the school; it is not uncommon in discussions with black students to hear them describe their teachers as intruders. However, it has been our experience that these attitudes are expressed toward new, young, white teachers. Seldom have we heard these views expressed in regard to a teacher who had served in the school for a period of three years or more. The most important observation to come from our experiences in working with black students is one that involves their perceptions of the white teachers' abilities. It is our opinion that most black students perceive the white teacher as being well prepared in regard to the subject matter of the course being taught, and in many cases this is the one point at which the color of the teacher as a factor in the relationship is minimized.
>
> Their physical and intellectual worlds are quite limited; many have never been more than a few blocks away from home; many do not own a single book, nor do their parents. Almost all come from broken homes . . . The home environment has not, does not, and in many ways can not prepare the children for school or encourage them to do well in school . . . They live difficult, chaotic lives and do not come to school with curiosity, interest and controls that the middle-class-oriented school expects, demands and uses as an assumption for much of its curriculum.

It must be pointed out, however, that this teacher probably demonstrates more insight into her own perceptions than past research findings concerning this question would indicate. In fact, several early studies reported that white, middle-class teachers do, in fact, tend to underestimate the ability of minority children, usually misinterpret their goals, and generally express a preference for teaching white pupils (Gottlieb, 1964; Haryou, 1964).

The research evidence concerning white teacher expectations of black student performance is very sparse. Even the massive Coleman Report (Coleman, et al., 1966) did not adequately assess white teachers' attitudes and expectations toward minority group pupils. However, it seems safe to speculate that the individual whose personal educational experience involved being a part of a middle-class culture, where children were expected to be adept in the handling of educational tasks and whose parents

played an active role in the school and monitored the homework brought home by the children, must experience severe episodes of cultural shock when they are confronted by a class of black, low-socioeconomic youngsters. It is evident that schools of education have not, in the past, been able to or attempted to modify this individual's expectations concerning what these students should be achieving or are able to achieve in the classroom. On the basis of this, there is little reason to believe that they will be realistic in their expectations, whether these are too high or too low. The fact that black teachers are more likely than white teachers to come from backgrounds similar to those of the children in the black community probably tends to make them more realistic in their expectations.

It has been our experience that black teachers base their expectations upon a much truer perception of what the child needs to survive outside of the school, as well as within. White teachers, on the other hand, with less personal identification, are more singularly oriented toward the requirements of the classroom.

"Is the attitude of the white teacher in a black school one of tolerance rather than one of acceptance of black students?"

An urban white teacher reported (Levy, 1965) that she was most impressed by the fact that her black students were cynical and disillusioned about school and life in general; that they were, at age ten, hostile, rebellious, and extremely bitter; and that many already belonged to gangs and even had police records. She perceived them as hyperactive, and compared them to wild horses who had been suddenly fenced in. She saw her major teaching problem as: "How can you tame them without breaking their spirit?"

Another young teacher (Ornstein, 1965) reported that the discipline problem with minority children is overwhelming, and there are too many emotionally disturbed children with whom to cope. Whenever a white teacher is threatened or assaulted by these children, he or she is usually put on the defensive so that charges cannot be brought against them.

The above paragraphs reflect the position of the white teacher in the black classroom. Let us, at this point, examine the position of the black child. Bullock and Singleton (1962) highlighted his predicament. The black child is:

- Taught by a middle-class Anglo-Saxon teacher who probably lives outside of the school district
- Counseled by middle-class counselors who often have little understanding of his specific needs or those of the community
- Exposed to textbooks and classroom materials written for and entirely by Anglo-Saxons
- Scolded by middle-class principals and assistant principals

And most important:

- Graded by IQ and other standardized tests which reflect the cultural norms and experiences of the Anglo-Saxon group, and as the authors conclude, is expected to behave in a manner prescribed by his Anglo-Saxon teachers.

The question thus becomes: Who is tolerating whom? Does the child accept the white teacher because of his or her majority group status? Does the white teacher accept the black child because of his or her minority group status? Or, is there mutual tolerance? These are questions which cannot be answered within the scope of the present paper. It is doubtful if it is a question which could be theoretically decided by any armchair speculation, for the answer must certainly depend upon the personality of specific teachers involved and the nature of the teaching situation.

The relationship between teacher attitude and classroom effectiveness requires much more empirical study than has been performed in the past. Probably the most outstanding research conducted in this area has been that of Robert Rosenthal (1968) on the self-fulfilling prophecy in the classroom.

"How do white teachers perceive black parents?"

The response of black parents in the Lincoln report indicated an interesting perception:

> They see us as shifty, dark, ignorant, nappy-haired, unattractive, smelly and dirty . . . They see us as being hostile.

This perception is interesting, basically because it reflects what is considered a very old stereotype maintained by whites about blacks. In a recent study, Campbell and Schuman (1970) examined white beliefs about blacks. Part of their findings are relevant to the white teacher-black parent situation. They found that of those whites who think few white people dislike blacks: (a) 53 percent believe few blacks dislike whites; (b) 8 percent believe that almost all blacks dislike whites. Of those whites who think almost all white people dislike blacks: (a) 8 percent believe few blacks dislike whites; (b) 67 percent believe almost all blacks dislike whites. In light of these findings by Campbell and Schuman, it appears that the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s has had an impact upon the perceptions of black people by whites. The shift has been from "naturally lazy" to "naturally hostile." Unfortunately, when these views are held by the white teacher toward black parents and students, they serve no useful purpose in eliciting the cooperation of black parents in school affairs. As with the other issues which we have considered so far, much more research is needed in order to determine better ways to bring white teachers and black parents together.

"Is the authoritarian teaching approach superior to the permissive approach for the white teacher assigned to a black school?"

It was the perception of a white teacher respondent in the Lincoln study which highlighted the different approach to teaching of white and black teachers. The point was made that black students prefer an authoritarian approach rather than a permissive one.

Frank Reissman, in his book *The Culturally Deprived Child*, describes what he considers a successful approach for the teacher of minority children:

The most successful teachers in terms of the culturally deprived children seem to

combine the traditional concepts of structure, order, discipline and strong external demands for achievement with the newer methods of down-to-earth learning by doing.

This is a very unfortunate generalization. There are children who respond well to a highly disciplined environment and demonstrate efficient learning under these conditions. However, there are children who would find an authoritarian, highly disciplined teaching and learning environment extremely suppressive. It is important that we realize the importance of the personality of the teacher in determining which approach is appropriate for a particular class of children. It is my opinion that a generalization concerning which approach is best for black children is doomed to be confronted with so many exceptions as to be invalid in the real world. A more sensible approach for helping white teachers select the appropriate approach to teaching black students would be for teacher training programs to emphasize the importance of flexibility and strength in their relationship with students. The development and application of a humanitarian attitude in dealing with all children may provide the basis for the selection of the appropriate approach to classroom management and teaching.

"Does the learning style of the black child differ from that of the white child?"

Of the issues which we will consider in this paper, this one is surrounded by the greatest amount of concern and myth. Yet, there has been a great deal of research effort directed toward its resolution.

Many of the major studies which deal with the learning potential of the black child have been based upon the premise that there is something wrong with the black child. Hess and Shipman (1965), in their study of cognitive elements in maternal behavior, began with the assumption that black children are inadequately socialized and are, therefore, subject to deficient intellectual development, which in turn, produces school failure. Bereiter and Engelmann (1966) suggested a similar interpretation. They have advocated "verbal deprivation" as an explanatory concept in their efforts to characterize the failure of black children in school. According to these authors, "culturally deprived" children do not think effectively at all. They suggest that the black child has not learned the language rules that are necessary for defining concepts for drawing references, for asking questions, and for giving explanations. Bernstein characterized the thinking potential of the child as follows:

> There is a relatively low level of conceptualization, on orientation to a low order of causality, a disinterest in process, a preference to be around, by, and respond to, that which is immediately given . . . this partly conditions the intensity and extent of curiosity. . . . These logical considerations affect what is learned and how it is learned, and so affect future learning. . . . There will be a tendency to accept and respond to an authority that inheres in the form of social relationships rather than in reasoned or logical principles (1961, pp. 301-302).

It is unfortunate that the point of view expressed by Bernstein has found acceptance among those who are responsible for the educational futures of black children. Like many researchers before him, Bernstein's analyses are full of over-

generalized misperceptions concerning the learning potential of the poor, minority child. Fortunately, there is a recent accumulation of data which would indicate that the conclusion of Hess and Shipman and Bernstein have been incorrect in their opinions concerning the role of language in the development of cognition in the minority child (Williams, 1972; Rivers and Williams, 1972; Rivers, 1973).

What about differences in learning style? Probably the most definitive studies regarding this question have been those performed by Stodolsky and Lesser (1967); Lesser, Fifer, and Clark (1965); and Rivers (1969). The conclusion which is common to all of these studies is that different ethnic groups may differ in the *pattern* of primary mental abilities and skills. It is possible to say that ethnicity affects the organization of mental abilities. It is clear that, in some respects, each ethnic group must adapt to an environment which is, in many respects distinctive and, consequently, requires a unique pattern of mental abilities. This may call for different styles of learning, but when styles are compared, it does not mean that one style is inferior to another. I believe that we can safely conclude that the black child employs a different (but not inferior) style in learning about his environment than does the white child. This should certainly serve as a positive challenge to the white teacher who has been trained in traditional teaching methodology.

It must be kept in mind that the traditional division between abstract and concrete learning abilities often used when comparing the learning styles of black and white children is not valid within the framework of the findings mentioned above. There is no valid evidence to suggest that the learning style of black children is more emotional and concrete than that of the white child.

"Is it necessary for white teachers to be open about their racial feelings toward black students?"

The famous psychoanalyst, Bruno Bettelheim (1965), in discussing the role of the white middle-class teachers in the black school pointed out:

> that these middle-class teachers, despite their desire to be helpful to the culturally deprived [black]* child, and despite their best intentions, often get bogged down because they cannot transcend their own value system to meet that of the children. . . . They need a clinician's help in going beyond their own middle-class mores, a task they find difficult at best, despite their conscious desires.

Zamoff (1966), in an article entitled "The Attitudinally Disadvantaged Teacher," speaks to this question in an amusing and sometimes sarcastic manner. He points out:

> Studies of school desegregation have revealed a sizeable percentage of teachers who can charitably be labelled "attitudinally disadvantaged." That large number of teachers hold negative attitudes toward Negro children is not surprising to social researchers. . . . I would like to propose in-service training for Negro pupils about to enter classes, which will be taught by "attitudinally disadvantaged" teachers.

* Brackets mine.

Among the ten premises set down by Zamoff are the following:

- The most creative Negro student can expect to attain only very limited success with the attitudinally disadvantaged teachers.
- The Negro student should avoid references to the attitudinally disadvantaged teacher's home and community because these are likely to be painful and unpleasant for the teacher.
- A Negro student cannot be expected to mitigate intellectual damage suffered by an attitudinally disadvantaged teacher before she or he begins to teach.

Whether one agrees with Bettelheim that limited psychotherapy should be employed in helping the biased teacher overcome her difficulties in dealing with black children; or with Zamoff, who proposes that the students be equipped to deal with the biased teacher; a very important fact remains. That fact is that as long as the teacher harbours biased and negative feelings toward her students, no adequate interpersonal relationships will be established between teacher and pupil; and without this, efficient teaching and learning will be impossible.

It is felt that each white teacher in a black school should deal directly and openly with any major biased feelings, which relate to black youngsters as a group, and that these feelings be expressed in an environment in which the teacher may be helped in finding ways of modifying them. Maybe presemester workshops, individual therapy, or personal counseling from an experienced black teacher may be the vehicle(s) for achieving this goal.

"Who is the effective white teacher in the black school?"

Teacher training institutions have, in general, been most concerned with the "good" pupil, "good" schools, and the "good" teacher. Their training programs have been organized around the "good" model. When this kind of training is juxtaposed against the situation which confronts a middle-class teacher in the black school, the faultiness of this training approach begins to show itself. Of all the variables which make it difficult for the white teacher trainee to succeed, the inability to exercise control of discipline problems looms largest. Of all the variables which drive any teacher from the urban classroom during the first year of teaching, discipline problems are the most important.

Who then is the person able to survive this initial problem area and proceed to successfully teach in the urban black school? Miriam L. Goldberg (1964) has proposed a hypothetical model of the successful teacher of disadvantaged (black) pupils. Her major premise is that the teacher who is successful with any group of pupils is the one who respects the children in his classes and they, in turn, respect him. Although Goldberg's model is a highly idealized version of reality, it is felt that a reflection on the basic factors which characterize this model could serve as a point of discussion for those interested in becoming teachers, regardless of the ethnic membership of her future students.

Goldberg proposes that the successful teacher is:

- Aware of the ethnic group membership of his pupils and how this membership shapes the children's image of themselves and their world

- Aware of the various family structures from which the children come
- Knowledgeable about the history, traditions and social structures of the various ethnic groups and their unique cultural patterns
- Aware that the language of his pupils is closely tied to the lives they lead
- Knowledgeable of how a child's abilities are assessed and, therefore, recognizes the glaring deficiencies which permeate standardized tests of ability*
- Aware of the danger of the self-fulfilling prophecy of expecting, and consequently finding, a low level of achievement
- Well prepared in the subject which he teaches .

*Statement of test deficiencies represents the view of the present writer.

Some Concluding Remarks:

It is obvious that a great deal of research and study is still needed in order that we may begin to develop the quickest and most feasible training techniques with which to help the white teacher in the black school to adjust to her teaching assignment. The task should certainly fall to the teacher training institutions of this country. Such factors as: new techniques for candidate selection, the development of new courses and the provision of laboratory experience are only a few which should be the subject of intensive research efforts by those who are talented in educational research. This is necessary for the sake of the young new teacher and for the students whose futures she holds in her hands.

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"PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WHITE TEACHERS IN BLACK SCHOOLS"

By
Sidney D. Segal*

If schools are to be more responsive to the needs of today's multiethnic society, they must quit pigeon-holing whole groups of people and start treating them as individuals. To accomplish this, educators have a responsibility to make the first move in reaching parents and students and use school as a community base for abolishing prejudice.

My immediate reaction to the problems that most white teachers encounter in black schools but would not ordinarily find in the predominantly white school, is the rather meager background not only to understand the student's situation, but to direct him in search for broader experiences!

Other conclusions would include the following: A number of white teachers have explicitly stated, or at the least implied, that black children are emotionally and intellectually inferior. As a result, in a number of cases, teaching is merely a watered-down process, not to be taken too seriously.

Another conclusion is that black students are all alike – physically, culturally, economically, and educationally.

Although integration of the races is the law of the land, the fact is that de facto segregation still exists in many school systems. The evidence which has been assembled to document the plight of the black shows only too well the prejudices of the white teacher and the effects of racial discrimination upon black children. The past Racial Isolation Report, the Coleman Report, and the Kerner Report indicate the immense impact of segregation on the black children. Segregation has created in many black children a sense of inferiority, a negative self-image, and a feeling that blackness is a stigma. The white teacher will accept an assignment in the black school because he believes he will not have to do much teaching. He feels that there will be very little pressure from the community because nobody really cares. The white teacher makes neither a personal nor a professional commitment to teaching in black schools.

Although attempts have been made to update curricula and programs to meet the needs of the black child, there are still serious environmental deficiences which make adjustments to the work of the school virtually impossible. Consequently, the black student seems to get progressively further behind in his achievement, in his adjustment to the demands of schooling, and in his relationships to the white teacher.

I would agree that white teachers, on the whole, lack the necessary motivation to teach in black schools. They are inadequately prepared to teach and work with a minority group. They lack the competencies to use the skills and techniques of effective interaction with children and adults of all points on the social spectrum. Unfortunately, many white teachers set themselves apart from others on the dogma that some are by nature superior. This dogma is the ultimate rationalization of the white teacher when he is forced to justify his discriminations against the black student. He may not say it in so many words, but what he means is that the blood of the white is superior to that of the black.

*Dr. Segal is a psychologist in the Philadelphia School District, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The problem of training teachers for schools in disadvantaged areas is not the same as the problem of preparing teachers to deal with racism in school and society. The white teacher may be well prepared to work with children and parents who are victims of economic and social deprivation. He may know how to relate to them, to empathize with them; and he may understand quite fully the social and economic forces that cause their plight. He may correctly assess the experiential background of the children and tailor his instruction to their interests and needs. He may know what sort of content is most conducive to their development, and he may know how to handle that content intellectually. The white teacher may know all of these things and still be baffled by the problems in an integrated school which originate in racism.

The white teacher generally has a more difficult time handling discipline problems in a predominantly black school. He may be oversolicitous and ignore the problems in order to avoid a confrontation, or he may run head-first into a situation without thinking and merely aggravate the problem even more. In some black schools, communication between the white teacher and the black pupil is either nonexistent or has largely broken down. The problem of restoring communication in such a situation is one with which the whole school faculty and the community must struggle.

The white teacher is ready to believe without question that his black students are so deprived and their home situation so depraved they will not be able to learn very much. Unfortunately, the predominantly black school is geared to the expectation of failure. Like the child, the white teacher fulfills this expectation. And as the self-fulfilling prophecy unfolds, it reinforces the teacher's low expectations.

Children in black schools do not learn to read adequately, despite all of the new technological methods devised. Compare an all-white school with a predominantly black one. The white school maintains steady improvement; the minority-group school steadily declines, getting farther and farther behind national norms.

These facts are far from new. The hypothesis that the poor achievement of the black students stems not from their poor homes, but from the poor opinion their teacher has of their homes has been carefully researched. In *Dark Ghetto*, Kenneth B. Clark states that black children do not learn because they are not being taught effectively, and they are not being taught because those who are charged with the responsibility of teaching them do not believe that they can learn, do not expect that they can learn, and do not act toward them in ways which help them to learn.

The self-fulfilling prophecy effect of the teacher's low opinion of the child has been in the literature for many years. It has, however, had little effect on the mass of standard educational theory taught in colleges and none on the education practice in the public schools. Even many black teachers, trained by the system, fall prey to the approved attitudes of contempt for the child and his home.

Because the average white teacher has no first-hand knowledge of life in the ghetto, he relies on the teacher-training school and the literature in the field.

The syndrome of "no motivation," "weak self-concepts," and "no curiosity" keeps reappearing in the literature despite some studies that have proved just the opposite. Generally, many black children are amazingly curious and motivated, but something happens within the school that takes away this motivation. Some studies reveal results that contradict the stereotype of the black parent being intrinsically less motivated for his child than his white counterpart. In a number of cases, black parents express significantly higher occupational and educational aspirations for their children than

does the white group as a whole. Perhaps the black parent and his child are not interested in realizing these aspirations and goals because they know they will not reach them in the end anyway, because the school has no serious intention of helping them reach these goals.

The white teacher is most infuriating to the black community when he exposes his great ignorance of the ghetto and yet is smug in the belief that he knows all about it. But suppose the white teacher chooses to go see for himself and takes a walk through a black community. How in the world can the white teacher even understand the black child if he never tries to understand the child's background or how he lives?

One noteworthy observation to discuss here is how the white teacher perceives the black educator. It is my belief, based on observation and personal experience, that the average white teacher tolerates the black teacher but generally does not respect him in the same way he does his white colleague. If the black teacher is promoted to a higher position or to an administrative level, he is often resented by the white educator, especially so when the black administrator runs a school composed of a predominantly white faculty. The white teacher is forced to accept his administrator but does so only in the line of duty, never gracefully.

A few years ago, a survey of new teachers was undertaken in the Philadelphia schools in recognition of the growing complexity of today's education. It reflected a commitment by the school district to learn more about the attitudes of its teachers. This survey also included feelings and attitudes of white faculty members in ghetto areas and in predominantly black schools.

The survey asked these teachers what difficulties a socioeconomic class presented. For some of the white teachers, no special difficulties were felt to be created by the black students' socioeconomic class. A number, however, did claim difficulties existed. Among those white teachers experiencing difficulty, communications problems were paramount. Half of the teachers with problems specified an inability to effectively communicate with and understand their black students. Some of the teachers' statements included the following:

> "I could not communicate with the students. I kept on expecting too much from them . . . and me."
>
> "Coming from a middle-class stratum of society, I find it difficult to understand, accept, and function effectively with the moral values and frames of reference that my students have."
>
> "I can't reach them!"

The second most frequently noted difficulty related to the above, stemmed from the perceived emotional problems of the black pupil generated by familial problems, poverty, and a lack of motivation. Other comments by white teachers:

> "The children seem to have such deep-seated problems outside of school that it is hard to work with them in school."
>
> "The students simply aren't motivated to learn in anticipation of future benefits."
>
> "I expected more responsibility and interest from the home."

The teachers reporting difficulty created by race pointed to a wide range of provocative situations, from the students' lack of respect and acceptance, and their

racist remarks, to the teachers' fear of discipline being misconstrued as racist and the teachers' general feeling of discomfort because of race. A number of white teachers interviewed indicated that it takes some time for their children to adjust to the idea that white teachers really want to help them. Resentment and antagonism still exist – on both sides – although some of the white teachers felt things were beginning to look brighter. White teachers generally feel that it is easier for a black teacher to control black students because he is not afraid of a racial incident. Among the white teachers expressing preferences for teaching at a black school, three-fourths (75 percent) said that they either preferred teaching low-income children or black children because accountability was unimportant.

As a School Psychologist I have had considerable contact with the schools in a predominantly black community. I have noticed a subtle, but at times definite, polarization between the white and black teachers, in the same school. In fact, unless one is sensitive to this problem, it may be somewhat difficult to clearly see the division. Yet, during a recent school strike in Philadelphia, the black teachers' demands and causes seemed at odds with those of the white teachers. Many of the blacks did come in to teach while the majority of whites were on the picket line. The aftermath was even more traumatic in that striking teachers ignored the so-called scabs. Granted that white scabs were equally ignored, there appeared to be a deliberate alienation between white and black faculties. Fortunately, the pendulum seems to be gradually swinging the other way now. Of course, the feelings of mistrust and resentment must, somehow, be resolved.

Approximately 35 percent of the high-school students preparing to be teachers range from "moderately bigoted" to "energetic white racists." These statistics come from a study recently done at Arizona State University. The study also revealed that many white teachers do not bear the responsibility of instilling confidence in their black students. As a result their students become very defensive and often must resort to negative behavior patterns to compensate for feelings of low esteem.

There are times when the white teacher is directly responsible for the discipline problems which occur in his classroom involving the black student. His (the teacher) own actions – or his reactions to various situations – openly invite further trouble. The teacher is the one who determines the direction which will be taken. Unfortunately there are some white teachers who feel that a student's failure to abide by each and every rule should be duly noted and dealt with summarily and firmly. They honestly believe that each student violation of a rule brings the school just one step closer to anarchy and, therefore, that each incident must be nipped in the bud. Far too often additional trouble of a significant nature arises after a teacher has verbally pounced on the black student, denouncing him before the entire class for his failure to comply with a teacher – or with a school-made regulation. Such teachers feel that *naturally* there can be no mitigating circumstances.

By courting trouble, teachers may lose sight of the real reasons that his student is in school. The strict observation of each and every rule without exception often wastes class time and appears somewhat ridiculous and prejudicial to the students. The white teacher who demands such rigid conformity should question his own motives.

There are also those teachers who declare that they always love all of their students (a totally unbelievable concept) while consistently employing a patronizing tone of voice. I believe that the black child is wise enough to recognize this patronization. I

know that the black parent and black teacher are probably well aware of this kind of action. I believe, too, that many who express concern for their black classes may be unconsciously deluding themselves.

I must, unfortunately, agree that white teachers see the black parent as a hostile, defensive, and rather ignorant individual who will only come to school for a fight. However, I also see the black parent either threatened by the white educator or resentful that his child is being taught by the white teacher. Most black parents will not visit schools because they feel they are educationally limited. Obviously, the impasse between black parent and white teacher must be broken. It means that teachers must make the first move by visiting parents' homes.

In essence I agree with the manuscript, and although I am now beginning to see a ray of hope that some of the problems can be resolved, educators, including teacher-training institutions, must assume full responsibility to use the schools as the community base for abolishing these problems.

The following are some *suggestions for minimizing the problems* and *recommendations* for further research:

The special circumstances from which children come cannot be ignored when preparing teachers, specifically the white. On the contrary, teachers should be trained to work with the cultural and racial background of each child. A child's cultural heritage should be considered by the teacher to be the basis for his education, not a stumbling block.

The teaching of black children does not require unique skills, as does teaching the blind, for the handicap comes not from the children themselves but is placed upon them by the situation in which they live and the schools to which they go. But it does require broad life experiences which few middle-class white teachers have had. Unless we stress this view of teacher education, we can unintentionally aggravate a potentially explosive division.

If the education of the white teacher is looked at in the context of the great variation among the children of the American people, the enormous dimensions of the teacher's task become only too clear. The educational system is devoted to the idea of a common school. It is the only institution through which all the children of all the people share in the wide range of experience that is both the richness and the poverty of American life. The teacher who can work with the children of only one social stratum or minority group is inadequately prepared to teach in the common school. The idea that the backgrounds and interests of the child must be understood if he is to be properly taught must now be put into practice. Skills and techniques of effective interaction with children and adults at all points on the social spectrum must be built into the competency of every teacher.

The teacher must also face the question of racial prejudice in himself. The white teacher harbors many prejudices of which he is unaware. The black teacher may carry feelings of resentment and aggression that come with a feeling of imposed inferiority. It is necessary for the teacher to face his personal problems squarely and to include in his program of preparation experiences to shock him into the realization of his prejudices and show him how to deal with them. Just as there are prejudices in the teacher's feelings and modes of thought, so too are these to be found in the black pupils and in the black adults of the community.

Proper education of the teacher will lead him to examine his own human prejudices

generally and, specifically, his racial prejudices, and it will discipline him in the techniques of handling problems of interpersonal relations that arise from racial prejudices in his students and their parents.

Our colleges, and particularly the teacher-training institutions, must take a strong second look at the problems confronting the education and training of prospective teachers. Revision of curriculum must be seriously considered, and current educational practices must reflect a greater concern for the process of learning and living than for what is taught.

Colleges and in-service groups should initiate active programs of compensatory education for the training of teachers, consistent with current knowledge from various disciplines, with the expectations that these programs will come closer to meeting the needs of all new prospective teachers than do existing programs. Such programs could include the following points:

- As much time should be allowed for the active study of minority-group children and parents as is now allowed for curricular study in workshops and in-service programs. Such study should emphasize techniques for evaluation of the black child's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development.
- Bringing black parents and community into arranged programs must be seriously considered. This can be a joint in-service venture which would include both black community members and white teachers. Awareness and desensitization techniques could be employed to bring these two factions closer together. The (black) community in turn can extend its invitation to having white faculty members attend meetings in the black community, preferably in individual homes. Effective programs should strengthen family life and bring a greater understanding between the black community and the schools. The black child and the white teacher cannot reconcile differences between the home and school world if the divergence is great.

A final suggestion for minimizing the problems encountered by white teachers would include the retreat of whites from the decaying inner cities to the suburbs. Although some reversal is occurring, this problem has reached alarming proportions. While the middle-class white is fleeing, the black continues to move into the cities. It is suggested that only when whites and blacks can live together, share together, and even plan together within a common neighborhood, only then will greater understanding be achieved. City administrators must use whatever incentives necessary to counteract the retreat from the inner cities. This would mean cleaner, roomier, and more-for-the-money kind of homes. It would also mean that the white neighborhood could be satisfactorily integrated if the white family would not panic and think in terms of value depreciation, etc. Also, greater business opportunities for the black, in terms of owning stores, and so on, must be resolved if greater community responsibility is to occur.

"PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WHITE TEACHERS IN BLACK SCHOOLS"

By
Dr. David Gottlieb*

There are a number of directions which can be taken to examine the role of the white teacher in the predominantly black school. The commentary presented in these interviews, the research of others, and my own research findings support the observation that race is very much related to both self-perceptions and the perception of others. At the same time, it is important to point out that even among people of a similar race there will be variations in perceptions and attitudes.

Not all whites, nor all blacks, nor all teachers, are cut of a common cloth. While race does seem to account for some of the observed differences in how people think, feel, and behave, it is essential that we also identify the factors that contribute to similarities in behavior and outlook. One such factor is the teacher's motivation or reasons for being in a particular school. Distinction should be drawn between those teachers who have chosen to be in black schools and those who feel they have been forced into such schools. There is evidence to suggest that in some cases public school officials will send "down" to black schools those white teachers who are considered obsolete, incompetent, or trouble-making. The inner-city school becomes a convenient dumping ground and storage center for those teachers who are considered unacceptable for white middle-class schools. This does not mean that in all instances black schools will be the recipients of incompetent white teachers. In some cases exactly the opposite will occur, with bright, energetic, innovative professionals being transferred to black schools. Still, in probably too many situations, black schools which are in fact in need of the very best of the teaching profession will receive people who have little to offer in the way of needed skills and understanding. Regardless of competency, any teacher who is assigned to a school which does not represent either his or her preferences or expectations is likely to be bitter. The feeling of bitterness and hostility is made all the more traumatic by a prevalent climate in the profession which sees black schools at the bottom of the prestige ladder.

At the other extreme are the white teachers who have chosen to work in black schools. While these people have in common a desire for teaching in black schools, they do not necessarily represent a monolith. Unfortunately the "right" and "proper" motivations are not sufficient to ensure quality teaching; and while altruism is a popular and commendable value, it is not a guarantor of appropriate or necessary skills. The desire to be helpful must be matched with the ability and skill to deal with the needs and expectations of those whom one seeks to help. Too often those who choose to work with the poor, disadvantaged, the less-than-affluent, believe that proper attitudes and values will be sufficient. I would propose that those in need of help, those in need of skills, and those in need of necessary abilities to survive in our society would prefer functional assistance to "understanding." We cannot assume then that those who choose to work with minority groups are necessarily the best teachers.

*Dr. Gottlieb is professor of sociology, University of Houston, Houston, Texas. He wrote the paper while at Pennsylvania State University.

We can, however, agree that they do represent a group who at least want to help the minority-group student.

There is also no reason to believe that all or most black teachers prefer to teach black students. Nor, as in the case with white teachers, does it follow that those who choose to teach other blacks will necessarily be competent in their activities.

My point is that motivation is important and may help explain why teachers react the way they do to students, parents, and other teachers. At the same time motivation alone does not automatically determine teacher effectiveness.

Further, we cannot assume that race similarity alone — black to black or white to white — will minimize the problems of learning experienced by many students. Nor will student achievement necessarily follow if and when teachers of different racial backgrounds resolve their differences as to who can best relate to black children — whites or blacks.

To my mind such discussions, while of some intellectual and emotional value, perhaps provide very little in the way of positive outcomes. Rather, such discussions manage to contribute to the further diffusion of misinformation and negligence of real issues.

I believe that we have become so caught up in the rhetoric of the proper and right attitudes that we have abandoned the search for the essential ingredient of education. That is, the teaching of skills and abilities that are crucial to survival in our highly complex and ever-changing society. I am talking about different kinds of necessary skills, such as skills related to work and careers; skills which enhance feelings of self-worth and control over one's self and one's environment; skills which enable the student to make life choices maximizing goal attainment; skills which enable the young person to explore, if he so chooses, the fields of art, literature, and drama; and skills which enhance interpersonal relationships. In summary, these are essential skills in the areas of education, career, and self-development.

Certainly young people perfer pleasant teachers. They also prefer teachers who understand the young and have a feeling for the many problems that are part of coming of age in our society. But more important, what most young people desire and need are teachers who can in fact teach and communicate the skills and behaviors which will enhance the attainment of goals and desires.

My own interpretation of the interviews would lead me to conclude that there has been much too much emphasis upon reading the motives of others and too little in the way of honest self-evaluation and self-disclosure.

White teachers are overly concerned with being liked by black students. Black teachers are overly concerned with whether or not white teachers can really relate to black people. Black parents are concerned with whether or not white teachers really care. What seems to be lacking is a concern with whether or not teachers — be they white or black, male or female, young or old — are providing young people with necessary and appropriate skills. I am not denying the importance of attitudes. I know from my own research and observations that white teachers do often see black children as different from white children. I know that black parents have every right in the world to question the integrity and motivations of white teachers and white school administrators. I also know that there are many black teachers who are less than rational in their judgments of whites and blacks. My point is that these attitudes, perceptions, and generalizations are not only of secondary importance, but they

become a convenient cover for not dealing with the essential question. The essential question is what are the behaviors that a teacher must communicate in order to maximize learning among students? What is it that students want? What is it that students need in the way of skills and behaviors which will enable them to become productive and responsible citizens?

Let me begin with the following observation. In all of my work with young people, particularly minority group youth, I have rarely encountered a young person who chooses to fail or who prefers poverty, isolation, or alienation. Virtually every piece of research I have ever seen certainly indicates that poor youth, white or black, seek to live the good life. Instances of poor youth choosing the counterculture life style are few and far between. It is rarely the poor youngster who rejects the middle-class life style. On the contrary, the research on student activists and rebellious youth makes clear that it is more often the more affluent, white youngster who takes the position of self-alienation and self-removal from the social system. Alienation among the poor is much more likely to be the result of unjust economic, social, and political systems. Unlike his middle-class counterpart, the poor youngster is forced out of the system — he rarely opts out of his own accord.

The point here is that we need not be overly concerned with instilling motivation in black youngsters. These young people do have the desire to succeed. What they lack are two things: first, the necessary skills and abilities; second, a social system which will encourage and facilitate the attainment of their goals.

With regard to the latter observation, it is of interest to note how we conveniently hold the child responsible for failure to compete in an inequitable contest. We are all bright enough to know that our society is structured in a manner which minimizes chances of success for the poor, for women, and certainly for blacks. We verbalize our understanding by pointing out that blacks are the last to be hired and the first to be fired. We know that there are marked discrepancies between the earnings of whites and blacks even though they hold similar credentials and jobs. We know that blacks are more likely than many whites to be living in rotten structures, crowded conditions, or stifling environments. We know that many of our tests and indices of intelligence and achievement are biased toward the white, middle-class child. We know that inner-city children have less in the way of constructive leisure time activities than children of the suburbs. We know that black parents have generally less educational experiences than whites. We know also that poor children have far less in the way of helping resources than do affluent children. At the same time that we recognize these inequities, we deal with the child as if he or she were really responsible for his or her condition. Rather than bringing about a change in the inequities of the social system we lay the burden of proof upon the child. We do, in other words, treat the child not as if he or she were the victim but rather the cause of the problem. The emphasis then is upon changing the child and not the system. Obviously the child is an easier target. The child is there in the classroom. To take on the child is not as difficult or threatening as taking on the system which continues to produce an endless stream of victims.

Two points then must be understood: first, the black child does not lack the proper attitudes and motivation; second, that as we seek to change the child it is equally important, perhaps more important that we change the social system.

Let me now turn to what black students want or expect of the educational experience. In this case my comments are based upon two pieces of empirical research.

The first is a national study of how black students perceive and interact with white and black teachers. The sample for this research consisted of graduating high-school seniors. The second piece of research was based upon a study of graduating college seniors from five different colleges and universities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In both studies the major differences between white and black students was not found in their aspirations. Both white and black students desired posteducational life styles that could be described as middle class. Both racial groups wanted good jobs, good neighborhoods, good family life, and an involvement in activities which would be satisfying to the individual and of benefit to the society. The major differences between the two racial groups were as follows: first, that black youth were less likely than whites to see a fit between their aspirations and their expectations – that is, that black youth were more uncertain than white youth as to whether they could or would in fact attain their aspirations. Second, black youth more so than white youth felt they lacked the resources to achieve their goals. For example, black youth much more than white youth felt that their parents did not possess material, social, or political assets which would be of benefit to the students' goal attainment. It was not a question of parental desire. Black children made it very clear that their parents have every desire for their children to be successful. The discrepancy, again, is not in parental desire to help, but in ability.

There are few differences between the two racial groups with regard to why they went to high school or why they went to college. For both groups the motivations for attending school are the same. First, they want to acquire necessary occupationally-related skills. Second, they want to mature, to learn more about themselves, to arrive at some kind of career and life-style closure, to enhance interpersonal skills, and, finally, to gain broad intellectual knowledge and understanding. It is also important to point out that there is little variation between the two racial groups in their evaluation of the high school and college experience. For both groups there are two areas in which they feel that their expectations have not been fulfilled. Students feel that they have not been provided with necessary occupational skills and information. They also feel that they have not had sufficient opportunity to resolve the issues of self-concept, self-identity, and feelings that they can in fact control their own destinies. There is consensus among both groups that they have been provided with vast amounts of information. However, the relevancy of this information is subject to question by both racial groups.

The evidence provided to this point suggests that there are few differences between poor and affluent, or black and white students, with regard to attitudes, aspirations, and evaluations of the educational experience. The difference we have noted is that black students more so than whites feel that they will not be able to attain their career and life-style aspirations. The data also make clear that while white students do have facilitative resources which might help compensate for what they do not acquire in the educational experience, such is frequently not the case with black students. In other words, black students are much more dependent upon our educational institutions than are white students, and in many cases they end up in educational institutions which provide the least in the way of facilitative skills and abilities. Here we are not talking about teachers alone. Rather, we are talking about the differences in what schools offer in the way of counseling and a positive school climate. Unfortunately, in

many predominantly black schools the expectation is that students are terminal educational cases. In high school the black student is not expected to go beyond high school; in college he is expected to drop out prior to graduation, or at best to cease his formal education with the acquiring of the baccalaureate degree. One obvious result is that black students do not get the counseling or preparation they need to go beyond either high school or college. The prevailing social climate is not one that stresses academic achievement or educational mobility. At the college level we find that because of their financial limitations and their lack of awareness of the professional world, black students end up in either two-year colleges or colleges with few professional alternatives. One result is that black college graduates are far less likely to go on to graduate and professional schools than are white college graduates. They are also more heavily concentrated in a few academic majors than are white students. It is not surprising, then, that we find few blacks in the fields of law, medicine, business, economics, and the various physical sciences. The data would certainly support the image of the self-fulfilling prophecy. We do not expect blacks to occupy more prestigious and powerful positions. Hence, we fail to create the conditions which would give them access to such positions. Since they are in fact absent from such fields and careers, it is all too often concluded that their absence reflects personal preference, lack of ability, or lack of desire.

Turning now to the way in which black and white students see black and white teachers, I will be reviewing data from the high-school senior study. In this case all students were asked to assess the desire and ability of their teachers to assist them in matters of educational and career guidance. The students were also asked to report the extent to which they actually interacted with their teachers in matters of educational and career futures.

The first observation would be that regardless of the racial composition of the student population, black students are more likely to see teachers as having the ability to assist in matters of career and educational futures. The race of the teacher does not seem to make as much difference as the race of the student. Again, black students are more likely to see teachers (white or black) as possessing necessary counseling abilities. The data also show that black students more frequently perceive white teachers as having these abilities than black teachers. Evidently, to some degree at least, black students believe that their white teachers possess more or superior counseling information than do their black teachers.

When perceptions of teacher desire to help or counsel are examined, some interesting reversals do occur. Black students tend to view black teachers as more likely than white teachers to be willing to assist in matters of career and educational counseling. White students, on the other hand, see no differences in the desire of white and black teachers to be helpful.

When we examine the relationships between perceptions of the teacher's ability and desire, and actual interaction with teachers, the racial differences are most impressive. For white students, the best predictor of interaction with a teacher (black or white) is the perception that the teacher desires to help the student. If the teacher is seen as willing to help the student, then there is student-teacher interaction. Perceived desire is a better predictor for white students than is perceived ability. Conversely, for black students perceived teacher ability to help is more important. In other words, even though the black student may see the white teacher as lacking the desire to assist in

career-educational matters, the student will still seek interaction if the teacher is perceived as having the ability to help.

In summary, the following can be concluded from the high-school data. Black students see black teachers as being more willing to help them with problems of career and education than are white teachers. At the same time white teachers are seen as having greater ability to assist in problems of career and educational futures than are black teachers. The black student, despite his feelings about the attitude of white teachers, will still interact with these teachers because they are seen as people who do have needed information. Such is not the case with white students.

There are a number of explanations which might be offered to account for these findings. No doubt many black students have come to believe that regardless of whether they are teachers or not, whites are not particularly eager to be of help to blacks. It may also be quite true that white teachers by their behavior in fact communicate the impression that they are not approachable for assistance. The critical point here, I believe, is not why black students may feel that white teachers are not desirous of being helpful. Rather, the more important point is that despite these feelings there is interaction with the teacher. In a sense what the black student seems to be saying is, "I really don't give a damn what you think about me. But as long as you have the information and skills I need, I will let you teach me."

Earlier I pointed out that I felt that much of the commentary found in the interview represented a cover-up. There were expressions of feelings about who could best relate to black students. There was dialogue about who could feel more comfortable with black students. There were questions raised about the real motivation of white teachers. The debate ultimately centered about the question of whether or not white teachers could be as effective as black teachers in working with black children. I take the position that such discussions represent a cover-up for several reasons. First, I am not aware of any empirical evidence which suggests that race is the best predictor of teacher quality. In fact, the educational profession has failed to arrive at some consensus as to what does represent teacher quality or effectiveness. Second, there is no empirical evidence that black students prefer black teachers or that they consider black teachers to be more effective than white teachers. Third, there is no empirical evidence available which would support the observation that black students show higher levels of academic achievement when taught by black teachers as opposed to white teachers.

What these endless, and for the most part fruitless, discussions manage to do is to keep us away from dealing with the primary tasks which should confront all teachers. First, it is necessary to identify the skills, abilities, and behaviors which contemporary youth, be they white or black, need in order to become productive, responsible, dignified, motivated, and satisfied citizens. Second, the educational climates, the experiences, and pedagogical techniques which will provide these essential skills, abilities, and behaviors need to be developed.

Once again, however, I want to point out that I am not denying the importance of the teachers' attitudes and values, nor am I suggesting that we can disregard the importance of race as a factor in determining how people view themselves and others. Needless to say, in our society, where racism has been so rampant, we could hardly expect people to be free of racial hatred and racial apprehension. Still, we can expect that despite these racial feelings and attitudes teachers can and should focus their

energies upon the task for which they have been professionally trained. It would seem that teachers and school administrators would do well to invest their time in discussions of the skills students need, how these skills are most effectively taught, and how students respond to teachers. The task is not a simple one and it is easy to understand why the emphasis in these interviews is upon teacher attitudes and teacher styles rather then on what can and should be done to fulfill the needs of students.

There are several other themes that arise from the interviews which I feel are also deserving of some comment. The interviews with white teachers suggest that these people maintain a defensive posture. They see themselves as uncomfortable strangers in a hostile land. In order to ease this feeling of alienation the white teacher focuses upon winning the friendship of the black student. Too often, however, in an attempt to be seen as a "buddy" by the black student, the white teacher may communicate the impression that the serious business of learning is of secondary importance. A classroom climate of indifference and disorganization tends to emerge. The white teacher then begins to sense that things are getting out of control and frequently resorts to the use of severe sanctions and the introduction of rigid disciplinary practices. The reactions of the students are both understandable and predictable. Having been somewhat suspicious of the white teacher to begin with, they now see this dramatic shift from buddy to disciplinarian as confirmation of their original suspicions. The teacher has changed the ground rules, and the students will now become active players in the new game. There are unfortunately no winners in this contest. The teacher will now spend endless hours attempting to maintain decorum, and the students will spend endless hours in conflict with the teacher. The teacher is no longer able to fulfill the salient goals of the educational process, and the students are acquiring little in the way of useful skills.

It is interesting to note in the interviews with black teachers that they stress the point that white teachers are too easy with the students. They charge that white teachers allow the students to get away with all kinds of disruptive behavior. In attempting to account for why white teachers allow such disruption in the classroom the black teachers tend to offer two explanations. First, they believe that white teachers do not really care about whether these children learn. Second, they suggest that the white teachers' inability to handle black children reflects a general lack of competency. To offer evidence of their greater understanding of black children, black teachers make the point that they do not tolerate nonsense in the classroom. They let the students know from the beginning that there will be no disruption or acting-up in the classroom.

One gets the distinct impression that white and black teachers do in fact operate in different ways. Their different approaches and styles represent opposite extremes of the student behavior continuum. Unfortunately the available data would suggest that neither of these extreme approaches will contribute to learning or academic achievement. There is a middle range which will enhance learning and student motivation. It is a middle ground where students recognize that while the classroom is not a playground, it can be a place where learning can be exciting, meaningful, and even fun.

In summary I have attempted to make the following points: First, it is essential that we cease to think in terms of racial monoliths. Second, we must begin to accept the often reported finding that black children do have the desire and motivation to learn and to achieve, and the problem faced by poor children in general and black children

in particular is a lack of facilitative resources. Third, it must be acknowledged that for the most part the learning and educational difficulties experienced by black children are primarily the result of an inequitable school system. Again, black children like other children do not choose to fail. Fourth, the constant rhetoric which centers about racial issues provides a convenient and damaging cover for avoidance of basic issues. For education, the more real goal is the identification of the skills and abilities which young people need and the development of techniques which will enhance the learning of these skills by students.

In the way of programmatic implications I choose to make only one suggestion. Every effort should be made to identify the kinds of programs and strategies which will enable teachers to possess the helping skills they need in order to fulfill their professional responsibility as teachers.

INSTRUCTION, LEARNING AND THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WHITE TEACHERS IN BLACK SCHOOLS

By
LaMar P. Miller*

The general subject of white teachers in black schools is one that presents a myriad of interrelated and complex questions. The issues range from sociological and cultural questions to those which center on teaching and learning and instruction. The problem in the past decade has been highlighted by the vast attention paid to the education of disadvantaged children and youth; the Civil Rights Movement; the Black Liberation Movement; the issue of desegregation; and in our large urban centers, the decentralization of school systems. Thus it would be difficult, if not impossible, to discuss all of the issues related to the subject under discussion.

Even a cursory examination of the literature reveals that very little research has been conducted that specifically deals with the question of white teachers in black schools. Therefore, solutions to many of the problems rest on information generally drawn from opinions and experiences. In the main, these solutions are of an affective nature. Generally, in this paper we will not attempt to deal with either psychological or sociological reasons to explain many of the problems encountered by white teachers in black schools. Instead, the effort here will be to focus on the school and the instructional process. In short, the underlying issue, as we see it, is not white teachers in black schools, nor black teachers in black schools, but black children in black schools.

Although the emphasis here is to focus on instructional problems, some brief comments can be made regarding the investigation under examination and some gut-like reactions to particular questions. The study must be categorized generally as a survey of attitudes and opinions regarding the problems of white teachers in black schools. In the main, the teachers interviewed are concerned with attitudes, behaviors, and the beliefs of white teachers who teach in black schools. The answers to the questions in the investigation are not at all conclusive, nor do they lead to any generalizable conclusions. We might easily have predicted the fact that differences would exist with respect to what white teachers think about white teachers in black schools and what black teachers think about white teachers in black schools since most teachers have grown up and lived in what is essentially a racist environment. Clearly past experiences and attitudes have had a profound influence on what teachers think and their ability to examine the issues raised in this investigation in depth.

The question of appropriate racial composition of faculty in a school populated by primarily black students may depend on a variety of factors. Obviously black schools ought to have a substantial number of black faculty and staff. It is essential that role models be provided in the form of black administrators and staff for children to see, but it is equally important to stress quality and competency. Moreover, children need to be exposed, whether black or white, to a variety of individuals who reflect the ethnic composition of the society in which we live. Thus it may even be beneficial to have a staff with a balanced racial composition.

*Dr. Miller, an educator, is educational director of the Institute of Afro-American Affairs, New York University, New York.

A much easier question to answer is whether or not black and white teachers in white schools encounter the same kind of problems. Ostensibly, the answer is yes, they do, but the difference is qualitative rather than quantitative. Even within racial groups of students, black or white, whether or not the teachers have similar problems depends on individual personalities. The same problems exist from one class to another in a heterogeneously grouped school. On the other hand, the qualitative differences depend on both student and parent responses to white and black teachers.

The question of differences between white middle-class teachers and black middle-class teachers depends on the interpretation of middle class. In some respects they mean two entirely different things. However, insofar as teachers are concerned, some distinctions can be made. White middle-class teachers are often the products of white lower- and lower middle-class families. They are frequently of minority ethnic groups and, therefore, believe in the Horatio Alger myth. That is, hard work and perseverance will produce tangible socioeconomic gains. They frequently view themselves as originating from an oppressed ethnic group and believe that if they were able to succeed, anyone else can succeed. On the other hand, black middle-class teachers, while aspiring to many of the same socioeconomic goals as white middle-class teachers, are more realistic in their appraisal of the role of racism in determining socioeconomic mobility. While they are as close to poverty (in terms of generations) as the white teachers, they have experienced social ostracism in a far more realistic or prohibitive sense and, therefore, realize that the Horatio Alger myth, while a myth in and of itself for all, is primarily a white myth.

In the final analysis the important thing with regard to questions concerning the attitudes, behavior, and beliefs of white teachers in black schools depends on the extent to which black students are negatively or positively influenced. It is certainly true that many white teachers have difficulty relating to black students as a result of background experiences or even biases conscious or unconscious. But it is difficult to imagine in this day and age that the black community would tolerate teachers, or administrators for that matter, who did not provide evidence of a commitment to providing quality education for black children. In any case, it may be more important to pay close attention to the philosophy of the school which provides a foundation for the instructional program and for the various beliefs and assumptions held by faculty and staff. This is not to suggest that the problems encountered by white teachers in black schools are unimportant. It is merely to point out that these problems may be the tip of an iceberg in the sense that they are indicators of more serious and fundamental questions which have not been answered. It is for this reason the remainder of this paper will focus on the instructional program.

A major question in the minds of a good many white teachers, and black teachers as well, has to do with providing explanations for persistent and cumulative educational underachievement of students, particularly in large urban schools. Regardless of the multitude of other factors and problems, the fact that the academic achievement of large numbers of black children is consistently below norm is a disturbing reality. Apparently what many teachers fail to understand, and indeed what there is little consensus about, are the factors responsible for the underachievement of minority-group children.

Among the theories which seek to explain underachievement are demographic explanations which argue that where children live and go to school is significant in

their achievement. Sociological explanations assert that cultural and class differences are the determining factors in low achievement of minority-group students. Some of these specific deficiencies cited as inhibiting the capacity to learn are: neighborhood crimes, delinquency, broken homes, overcrowdedness, unsanitary housing, and other general conditions of poverty which send children to school without breakfast and without adequate clothing. There are also psychological explanations which assert that black children lack the motivation to learn and are frustrated when required to learn or are held to high educational standards. The argument here is that academic aspirations are depressed by the cumulative effect of discrimination on previous and present generations, and that these children and their families perceive no economic or social status rewards which they could hope realistically to obtain through high academic achievement. Teachers who believe this expect children to be poorly motivated, inattentive, hyperactive, hostile, and aggressive. Two other theories seeking to explain underachievement are physiological explanations which point to neurological and sensory deficiencies related to deprivation, and biological and racial explanations which assert that minority group children are genetically inferior.

The major problem with respect to white teachers in black schools is that much of what teachers do in terms of the instructional program is based on one or more interpretations of the theories explained above. Teachers who have confidence in these theories are operating from a negative base because there are "deficient models of education." These explanations have a relationship to teacher attitudes and, more importantly, influence some of the behavior in classroom situations. For example, if a teacher accepts the sociological explanation, then the way to improve academic achievement among students who are victims of such things as poverty and housing conditions would be to change those conditions themselves. This would not require an educational program, but a vast program for social change. It is, in fact, easy for teachers to believe this because one is in daily contact with children who are the victims of poverty. What results is that teachers are prone to be sympathetic rather than empathetic. To put it another way, a teacher may feel her most important task is to make children comfortable rather than to try to teach them anything. What teachers and most educators fail to acknowledge is that the educational effect of significant sociological factors can be determined only when the educational processes, controlled by educators, function to maximum efficiency. Only when educational quality is held constant will we be able to determine the influence of other factors on learning.

In a similar vein a good many teachers believe the psychological explanation is the reason for the underachievement of black children. This is probably the most blatant and detrimental area because it results in the overrepresentation of black children in the group designated as mentally retarded. It has been demonstrated by researchers, Mercer for example, that this overrepresentation of black children in the group known as the mentally retarded begins with and rests on a matter of judgment by an individual teacher. In other words, the labeling of a child as mentally retarded often begins with a teacher who perceives that a child is not learning because he is either inattentive, hyperactive, hostile, or aggressive. What follows is a series of recommendations which start the child on the road to being labeled as retarded. There is absolutely no legitimate reason for an overrepresentation of black children in this group other than the fact that teachers do not understand the dynamics of working

with black children and thus resort to placing them in so-called special classes. The fact is that the so-called, emotionally disturbed or disruptive child is often a child of high energy and capacity who has not been effectively channelled toward academic achievement. Any proliferation of special classes, or special schools for that matter, for these allegedly disruptive children, or excessive suspension or expulsion, is counter-productive educationally.

Perhaps the oldest explanation for underachievement that absolutely cannot be tolerated is the biological or genetic theory that black children are intellectually inferior to whites because of inferior genes. Unfortunately, one cannot ignore such explanations because they have deep roots in American history and are compatible with the total contemporary pattern of racism. Further, these theories are offered under the guise of science and, therefore, influence social thought and policy with respect to programs designed to upgrade the quality of education provided for black children. The biological explanation is the only one that does not permit any form of external manipulation to remedy academic retardedness and to increase individual achievement. Theories that assume that children enter the world with inferior genes are clearly the most detrimental of all explanations for underachievement. In this area, it is safe to assume that there is a great difference between black and white thought. White teachers who believe that black children are genetically inferior obviously ought not be a part of any school system, let alone a black school system. Attenuation to this point of view would severely limit any teacher's ability to work with children.

In summary, what is strongly suggested here is that sociological and other dimensions of injustices can be critical determinants of a teacher's beliefs, attitudes, or actions if they are permitted to dominate the philosophy of the school and, thereby, the instructional program. The problems encountered by white teachers in black schools are more than just a matter of attitudes and beliefs. They are the results of a long history of pathological approaches to education insofar as black children are concerned. It will take more than just changing the teacher from white to black to improve our educational system and to reverse the trend of academic retardation. It will take an adherence to policies based on solid assumptions regarding the education of hildren.

The following related premises are supported by the best available evidence:

- A normal child will learn if he is properly stimulated and taught.
- Groups of children, if properly stimulated and taught, will learn according to individual differences.
- The rate of learning can be positively or negatively manipulated by a number of factors such as adult expectations, encouragement or discouragement, acceptances or rejection, compassion or humiliation.
- In a representative sample of human beings, the organically deficient human being comprises a relatively small percentage of any group.
- The average child requires skills, compassionate and stimulating teaching in order to reach or approach and fulfill his maximum academic potential.
- Successful educational programs are characterized by systematic and sequentially developed curriculum, high expectations for the students, effective teaching and diligent supervision.

It would be reasonable to conclude that many of the problems encountered by white teachers in black schools result from either lack of knowledge or opposition to the above premises. Obviously that is not the entire story. Without question, however, if there is a single most important factor which determines success or failure in the attempt to assure that each child is in fact learning up to the maximum level consistent with his potentialities, it is the critical role of the teacher. Given this inevitable and inescapable pivotal role of teachers, it is imperative that these problems that exist for white teachers in black schools be eliminated.

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PAPER BY PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS

"WHITE TEACHERS IN BLACK SCHOOLS: SOME SUGGESTIONS FROM THE 'FIRING LINE' "

By
Myrna Sumpter*
Angela McVeagh
Robert Burley
Helen Shields
Frederick Bence, Jr.

The opinions expressed by the parents and teachers in the composite interviews concerning white teachers in black schools in the inner city may be placed into at least four categories: exposure, relationships, preparation, and evaluation. The purpose of this paper is to describe each of the four categories and offer suggestions which may help a faculty bring its unique problems into clearer focus and find solutions for them.

This does not mean that a faculty can solve its problems single-handedly. It may mean, however, that unless the faculty is willing to become a dynamic agent of change, solutions to many of the complex problems facing white teachers in black schools will not be forthcoming.

As a dynamic agent of change, the faculty must be sensitive to the need for meaningful change. It must also be an initiator of change; an ambassador of change; and an evaluator of change. In short, the faculty must be willing to "carry the ball" to the community, institutions of higher learning, and the like. Therefore, all of the suggestions have been made in this context.

EXPOSURE: When many white teachers are assigned to black schools, they have not had very close contacts with blacks. Consequently, their impressions are generally formed, nurtured and defended based upon contacts with students and others in the school. Unfortunately, the impressions often give the teachers negatively distorted views of black students and parents — where and how they live; how they spend leisure time; their aspirations, their values; and so on. The impressions may also contribute to the seemingly insurmountable problems encountered by white teachers in black schools.

The faculty (or individual members) may:

1. Take a guided tour of the school/community prior to and during the school year.
2. Participate in and/or supervise extracurricular activities *after* the school day.
3. Volunteer to work with the various service and civic organizations in the community, e.g., YMCA.
4. Serve as summer-camp counselor, lifeguard, recreation director, etc., in camps attended by large numbers of black youngsters.

*Mrs. Myrna Sumpter is a principal of a public school. The other authors are teachers in public schools.

5. Sponsor social activities for teachers and parents periodically.
6. Become active in a speaker's bureau and speak in the community on special occasions, e.g., commencement.
7. Get to know students and parents in order to increase understanding among all elements of the school family.
8. Attend religious services in the community from time to time.
9. Read widely concerning the black culture and share the readings during a faculty meeting.
10. Use facilities in the community, such as the recreation center, for conducting tutorial sessions for students generally – not just the students in the school.
11. Visit the community library and become acquainted with the materials available for students on various reading levels.
12. Patronize the businesses in the community.

RELATIONSHIPS: The ability of teachers to relate well to one another, administrators, students, parents, and the community is essential for effective teaching, particularly for white teachers in black schools. However, it appears that some white teachers have difficulty relating because of a breakdown in communication. The breakdown is probably influenced by factors such as age, values, background, and interest.

Regardless of the reasons for the breakdown, problems are often manifested in a variety of forms. Sometimes they are manifested when parents complain about the disciplining of their children. Sometimes problems are manifested when students accuse teachers of being prejudiced. Sometimes they are manifested when white teachers in general are labeled as "missionary-type" by certain groups in the community.

The faculty (or individual members) may:

1. Conduct a comprehensive, orientation program for beginning teachers, with particular emphasis on the "personality" of the school-community.
2. Include parents and students on many more school committees as voting members.
3. Organize meetings with parents on a grade-level basis in an effort to inform them of school procedures and academic requirements; also, to solicit their support and involvement.
4. Establish a liaison committee of teachers, parents, students, and volunteers from the community for the purpose of fostering communication between the school-community.
5. Encourage the local board of education to hire more paraprofessionals in the school.
6. Publish a newsletter of primary interest to parents and the community concerning activities in the school and community.
7. Freely seek the professional advice of black teachers in the school whenever their advice may be helpful.

8. Participate in workshops conducted for the faculty by civic, religious, political, and service groups in the community.
9. Invite parents to classes on a regular school day so that parents, students, and teachers can discuss openly ways to facilitate learning.
10. Become more knowledgeable on topics of interest to the students.

PREPARATION: There may be a direct relationship between the positive experiences which white teachers have with black students and parents (and blacks in general, for that matter) prior to becoming teachers, and their effectiveness as teachers in black schools. For example, a white teacher who was reared in a racially-mixed neighborhood may perceive black students more realistically, at least initially, than the white teacher who was not. To the extent that this is true, the preparation of white teachers for black schools must necessarily begin long before they enroll in a school of education and must continue long after they have been assigned to black schools. The preparation must be both theoretical and practical. It must be based upon both research and common knowledge. It must be a cooperative effort between the school of education, local board of education, community, and school.

The faculty (or individual members) may:

1. Join with individuals from the community and conduct workshops periodically for faculty members in the school of education who are responsible for the preparation and supervision of student teachers.
2. Adopt the "buddy system" in the school and pair a beginning and an experienced teacher.
3. Request permission from school officials for teachers to observe teachers in other schools, particularly in their subject-area.
4. Provide teaching-related experiences for college students that show an interest in teaching in the inner city, not later than the sophomore year.
5. Encourage high schools in suburban areas to organize a corps for students who show interest in becoming teachers in the inner city and assist the schools in providing teaching-related activities for the students.
6. Encourage the paraprofessionals in the school to pursue a career in teaching, at least on a part-time basis.
7. Encourage more teachers in the elementary school to become reading specialists.
8. Recommend to the school of education that *several* courses in reading be offered for both prospective teachers and teachers in the inner city on all grade levels.
9. Discuss the idea of extending the student teaching period in the inner city school to an academic year, possibly with pay, and make recommendations to the appropriate school officials if the idea is approved by the faculty.

EVALUATION: Many white teachers teach in black schools in the inner city. Some of them have had many more fruitful experiences with blacks than other white teachers. Some of them have a greater ability to relate to multiethnic groups. Some are better prepared academically to teach in the school. Some are more deeply committed to improving the quality of instruction. Nevertheless, all of them are an integral part of the faculty; have both strengths and weaknesses; and should be expected to contribute

to their maximum. In this regard, a highly professional method of evaluation would do much to identify the strengths and weaknesses; answer questions concerning faculty utilization, and the like.

The faculty (or individual members) may:

1. Develop its own instrument for measuring performance and attitudes of teachers.
2. Use a skillfully prepared inventory form and solicit opinions from students, parents, and the community concerning the total school program.
3. Encourage teachers to construct a checklist and complete self-evaluations.
4. Encourage teachers to make much greater use of the video-tape machine as a means of evaluating their teaching.
5. Place microlessons on videotapes and show the tapes to parents, e.g., PTA meeting, and others.
6. Spend more time in faculty meetings evaluating teaching and learning in the school.
7. Consider team teaching and interdisciplinary teaching as a means of evaluating teacher performance.

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